



MARISSA STAPLEY

LUCKY BOOK CLUB GUIDE

Dear Reader,

When Lucky first came to me, she arrived like a lightning bolt during one of the hardest years of my life. My mother had been diagnosed with a terminal illness, and I could no longer focus on the book I was supposed to be writing. Lucky appeared, all at once, and became my companion through hospital corridors and long, anxious nights. She saved me that year. My mother read every word of Lucky before she died and loved her fiercely; on her deathbed, she whispered, “Go, Lucky, go,” as if Lucky were a third child. That blessing lives in every page of this story.

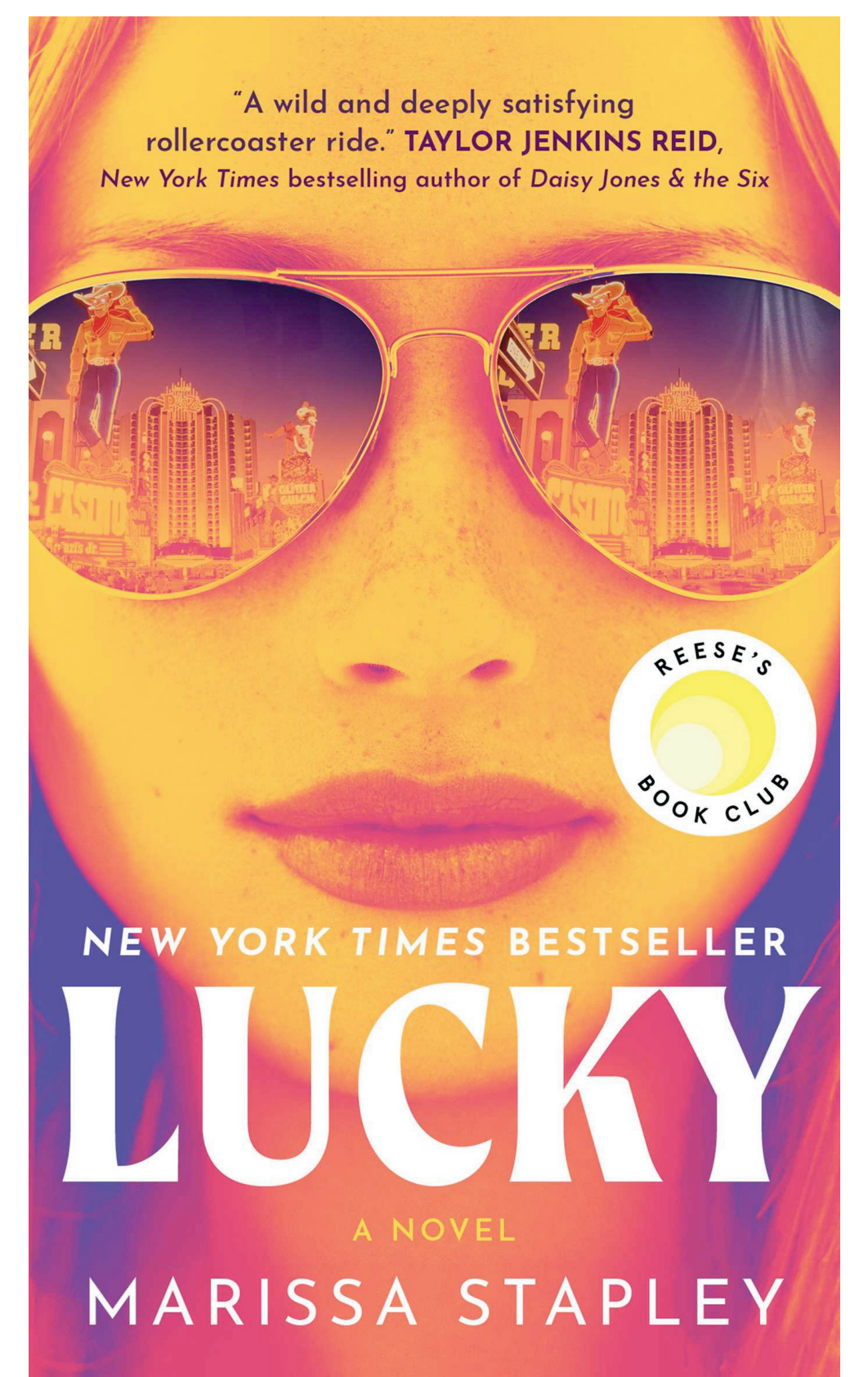
It’s been so exciting to watch Lucky take off after being selected for Reese’s Book Club (which, by the way, is an amazing resource for discovering your next great read—and for info and recommendations on all things bookish!). Reese Witherspoon truly changed my life, introducing Lucky to a whole new world of readers and turning her into a New York Times bestseller. And somehow, that was only the beginning.

I always knew Lucky was more than a single book. I imagined her on the page and on screen, and I saw this novel as the beginning of a larger journey, one that now deepens and continues with the Apple TV adaptation—and in the upcoming sequel I’m currently writing, *No Such Thing As Lucky*.

In a conversation we have had about the book and the show, showrunner and writer Jonathan Tropper has shared that the true emotional core of the Lucky series is the relationships explored in the novel—that it was very important to the team that the adaptation stay faithful to these complex relationships, no matter what changed otherwise. That meant a great deal to me, because relationships are at the heart of everything I write. I’m always trying to dig as deeply as I can into how people love and harm each other, how they disappoint and still choose one another, how they keep trying anyway.

At the same time, I’m a sucker for a pacey page-turner. I wanted Lucky to be the kind of book I love to read: emotionally rich but propulsive, the sort of story you race through and still think about afterwards. The structure, the time shifts between Lucky’s childhood and her adult life, and even the ending are all designed with that in mind: to make you feel as if you are right there with her.

Thank you for choosing Lucky for your book club. I hope my insight and these questions spark lively conversations about luck, love, survival, and the stories we carry... and I hope you’ll follow Lucky into the next phase of her journey.



Marissa Stapley



BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

CONT.

Q1.

The premise of *Lucky* came from a real-world idea: an unclaimed lottery ticket and the question of why someone wouldn't step forward to claim a life-changing prize. How does that "what if" shape the way you think about luck, risk, and what we're willing to sacrifice to stay hidden?

Q2.

The author wrote *Lucky* during her mother's illness, and that this character helped carry her through that time, does it change how you read the book? Are there moments in the story that feel different in light of that context?

Q3.

Many readers are deeply moved by the chapters showing Lucky as a child. How did seeing Lucky's early years with John and Priscilla affect your willingness to root for her later, when she makes morally questionable choices?

Q4.

How do the childhood sections invite you, as a reader, to extend compassion to Lucky in ways you might not if her story were told only in the present?

Q5.

The relationship between Lucky and John is rich with love but also filled with harm — some of it seeming unintentional. How did you respond to John as a character? Did you see him more as a loving, flawed father doing his best, or as someone whose choices are ultimately unforgivable?

Q6.

How does not knowing Sister Margaret Jean's full backstory affect the way you read Lucky's journey? What do you think the novel is saying about the people who shape our lives but remain partly unknown to us?

Q7.

Cary is both charming and morally complicated. Did you trust him? How did your feelings about Cary evolve throughout the novel? Do you see him as a worthy partner for Lucky, or more as a catalyst for her own self-understanding?

Q8.

How do the key relationships in *Lucky* — between Lucky and John, Lucky and Priscilla, Lucky and Cary — drive the plot forward? Which relationship gripped you the most, and why?



BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

Q9.

Lucky explores what happens when fortune, risk, and past choices collide. What do you think the novel is saying about what can be taken from us and what cannot? Where did you see bravery in this story — and in whom?

Q10.

Lucky is often described as a propulsive, “unputdownable” read. How do you think the book balances page-turning momentum with emotional depth?

Q11.

What is one craft choice in Lucky that stood out to you — structure, point of view, time shifts, voice — and how did it shape your reading experience?

Q12.

If you’ve watched (or plan to watch) the television adaptation, how do you imagine the experience of seeing a beloved book brought to life? What moments or relationships are you most curious to see on screen?

Q13.

Adaptations often change details while trying to stay true to a story’s heart. If you’ve seen any part of the show (or even just the trailer), what seems most faithful to the book’s spirit? What changes or additions are you curious about?

Q14.

Anya Taylor-Joy leads the adaptation as Lucky. In what ways does she match the Lucky you pictured in your mind as you read? Are there aspects of Lucky’s character you think an actor can reveal that the page cannot, and vice versa?

Q15.

Annette Bening brings a brilliantly unhinged energy to Priscilla in the adaptation. If you watched, what do you think she understood most deeply about Priscilla? How might seeing Priscilla performed change or deepen your feelings about the character from the book?

Q16.

Drew Starkey, who plays Cary in the adaptation, is definitely a fan favorite. How did you picture Cary as you read—and if you’ve seen images from the show, how does Drew’s interpretation align with or challenge that mental image?

Q17.

The sequel, *No Such Thing As Lucky*, returns to Lucky’s world. Which threads from this novel do you most want to see picked up in the next book — a relationship, a mystery, a moral question? What are you most curious about in Lucky’s future?



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

PART 1

Q: You've written and spoken about how Lucky "saved" you during the hardest year of your life, when your mother was ill, and how your mother became deeply attached to this character. How do you see Lucky as connected to your own resilience and your mother's?

A: I began writing Lucky a few months after my mother's cancer diagnosis, at a time when I wasn't sure I could keep writing at all. Lucky became our shared distraction and source of joy. I'd tell my mother (whose name was Valerie, which is something you might recognize from the book!) about Lucky's adventures, and she read every word of the book before she died. Lucky's resilience, her ability to keep going after betrayal and loss, is very much inspired by my mother's own bravery in her life. Seeing Lucky continue to shine makes me feel as if, somehow, my mother's journey isn't over either.

Every year, Hello Sunshine hosts a women's empowerment and connection event called Shine Away. At last year's gathering, Reese Witherspoon delivered an inspiring speech about the importance of "being your own lifesaver." Those words resonated deeply with me. There's no use waiting for someone—or something—to come along and save you. You have to do the work, even when it's hard, and trust that you can, and will, save yourself. That resilience is something my mother passed on to me. It lives in Lucky, and I'm sure it's part of what drew Reese to her character in the first place.

Q: What do you think the novel is saying about what can be taken from us, and what cannot?

A: At one point in my childhood, my mother lost all her savings to a pair of con artists and had to rebuild her life with grit--and humour. Later, I watched her face cancer with that same quiet ferocity. Lucky is very different from my mother on the surface: she's a streetwise grifter, not a minister's wife and interior designer, as my mother was. But they share a core resilience. I believe there are many things that can be stolen from you: money, health, a sense of safety. What can't be stolen is your courage to keep going, your ability to love, and the stories you carry forward as your own.

Q: We meet Sister Margaret Jean (the nun who finds an infant Lucky on the church steps and gives her to John) only briefly--yet her actions shape the rest of Lucky's life. Why do we learn so little about her? Is her mystery intentional?

A: Sister Margaret Jean is integral to Lucky's journey, but this book is not her story. I originally wrote much more about Sister Margaret Jean, but ultimately kept the novel tightly focused on Lucky so that the story would belong entirely to her, and so readers would feel that everything about Lucky's beginning is unique and a little bit mysterious.

There are people who shape our lives but remain partly unknown to us. I'm interested in that. The gaps in what we know can create a sense of myth or ache that follows us. With Sister Margaret Jean, I wanted readers to feel that haunting presence without stepping away from Lucky's point of view. Future books will widen the lens, but in this first novel the camera stays close on Lucky.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

PART 2

Q: Many readers have been deeply moved by the chapters showing Lucky as a child. Did you hope that seeing Lucky's early years might affect a reader's willingness to root for her later, when she makes morally questionable choices?

A: Those childhood chapters are among my favorite parts of the book. I began with a draft that was entirely in the present, and it didn't quite work: I had the twists, but I didn't yet have the heart. Once I went back to Lucky's origin story—not her abandoned and running from the law in Vegas, but that stormy night, the baby on the church steps, and everything that came after—I found the emotional core I'd been missing.

In writing about Lucky's younger years, I realized that we often feel more tenderness toward our younger selves than toward our adult selves. I think I wanted readers to meet Lucky's inner child on the page, to see her confusion, loyalty, and longing for safety, so that they could carry that compassion forward into the present-day storyline and understand her decisions in a deeper way.

Q: The relationship between Lucky and John is rich with love but also filled with harm, some of it perhaps unintentional but, in many ways, unforgivable. What was it like to explore a relationship like this?

A: John, and the way he treated Lucky, was often heartbreaking to write. There is so much genuine love between him and Lucky, and he can be warm and devoted. But he is also limited and stuck in his own patterns, and he hurts her deeply simply by being who he is. I wanted readers to feel that tension and to wrestle with why Lucky adores him and why she also has to break away.

Q: Lucky is a con artist, a survivor, a daughter, a woman trying to rewrite her story. Which of her identities resonated with you the most, and why? Where did you find her most relatable, and where did she challenge you?

A: I relate most to Lucky's determination to reinvent herself, and to the way she uses humour and bravado to cover vulnerability. She challenged me as a writer when she made choices I might not make—especially morally ambiguous ones—but that friction was important. I wanted her to feel real, not tidy; someone you root for even when you're not sure you approve of everything she does.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

PART 3

Q: Lucky is often described as a propulsive, “unputdownable” read. How do you balance page-turning momentum with depth of character and theme, and what do you wish more readers understood about the craft behind “easy” reading?

A: One of the hardest things I do is make a book feel effortless to read. “Easy reading” is not easy writing; it requires discipline, revision, and a lot of invisible work to create prose that flows and a plot that feels inevitable. With Lucky, I wanted readers to fly through the pages and still feel, afterwards, that they’d spent time with real, complicated people and big ideas about luck, love, and second chances.

Q: Lucky gets what could be described as a happy ending in this book. Do you see it as a complete story, or as the first chapter of a larger saga? What does “happy” look like for someone like Lucky?

A: For me, Lucky absolutely gets her happy ending here—but her story is far from over. I always intended to pick up her journey again in *No Such Thing As Lucky* and beyond. A happy ending, for her, is not a perfect life; it’s a new starting point with more choice, agency, a new relationship to risk, and luck.

Q: What was it like to go on set with the Hello Sunshine team and see Lucky brought to life?

A: Being on set was one of the most unforgettable experiences of my life — and a reminder that storytelling is deeply collaborative. I loved watching so many talented people, in a very tough industry, working joyfully because of a character who started in my imagination. One of the stunt performers called out, “My landlord thanks you, Marissa!” and that moment moved me more than any red carpet experience could. The glitz is exciting, but knowing that people could pay their rent because of Lucky felt like the most unexpected and meaningful reward. Plus, I know Lucky would love to know she was helping people.

Q: Anya Taylor-Joy leads the adaptation as Lucky. In what ways does she match the Lucky you pictured in your mind as you read? Are there aspects of Lucky’s character you think an actor can reveal that the page cannot, and vice versa?

A: Anya Taylor-Joy was always the actor I pictured as Lucky, long before casting was even a possibility. Meeting her and being able to tell her that in person was a highlight of this whole experience. I love how she talks about Lucky’s mix of vulnerability and sharpness, and her understanding that Lucky is both a survivor and a trickster — that she’s flawed, complicated, and still deeply lovable. Seeing that nuance reflected back by an actor I admire has been a dream.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

PART 3

Q: Annette Bening brings a brilliantly unhinged energy to Priscilla in the adaptation. What do you think she understood most deeply about Priscilla?

A: Annette leaned into Priscilla's chaos, but anchored it in a fierce, distorted kind of maternal love. She plays a woman who genuinely believes she's protecting her child, even as she harms him, and that tension makes Priscilla feel even more complex and human.

Q: Drew Starkey plays Cary in the adaptation and has quickly become a fan favorite. How did his casting come about, and what makes him feel so right for this character?

A: Anya Taylor-Joy was always my mental picture of Lucky, but I struggled to imagine an actor who could truly be Cary. The moment I saw Drew Starkey in the role, it clicked—he IS Cary. He captures that mix of charm, vulnerability, and moral grayness that defines Cary on the page. Meeting him on set and seeing his affection for, and connection with, this character—and the entire story of Lucky—was a very exciting and rewarding experience.

Q: Adaptations often change details while trying to stay true to a story's heart. Were there any moments in the show — a scene, a line, or a performance — that made you think, "Yes, that's exactly the spirit of Lucky," even if it wasn't exactly as written in the book?

A: There are many moments like that, especially in the scenes between Lucky and John. The emotional dynamic feels exactly like what I intended, and wrote. I see the show as a conversation with the book rather than a carbon copy; sometimes it diverges, but it always lands on that emotional truth, and Lucky's spirit is always shining through.

In all my books, I'm interested in plumbing the depths of relationships — the ways love, loyalty, resentment, hope, and fear can coexist between people who are bound to one another. With Lucky, I wanted to marry that emotional depth with the kind of fast, compulsive reading experience I personally adore—and the show does this incredibly well, too. All versions of Lucky feel like the ultimate incarnation of my intentions: a story where the relationships are the emotional engine, and the plot moves with real momentum because those bonds are always under pressure.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

PART 4

Q: The sequel, *No Such Thing As Lucky*, returns to Lucky's world. What can you tell us about the next installment in Lucky's story? [WARNING: SPOILERS AHEAD]

A: In *No Such Thing As Lucky*, we meet Lucky one year after the end of this book, and her life has taken a devastating turn. Her only way out is a truly impossible job set by her worst enemy, Priscilla Lachaise: a heist that forces Lucky into a world of cursed jewels, global intrigue, and dangerous power games. The story follows her from the California underworld to Antwerp's diamond district and into the jungles and reefs of Belize, and is intercut with Priscilla's past and her obsessive love for Cary.

The book is a high-glamour caper, but at its core it's still about what the first Lucky book is about: survival, reinvention, love, grief, and the complicated bond between people who hurt each other and understand each other better than anyone else. Lucky crosses paths again with John, confronts who he really is to her, and begins to become a legend in her own right. Underneath all the adventure, though, she's still Lucky Armstrong: a woman with a crooked moral compass and a fierce heart, learning that life, like any good con, is equal parts risk and reinvention.

I hope readers carry forward the idea that Lucky's "happy ending" is actually a new beginning that is just as unsettling as where we found her at the start of *Lucky*, and that the question of what she deserves — in love, in family, in fortune — is still very much alive. In *No Such Thing As Lucky*, there will be familiar faces returning, and a chance to deepen some of the relationships and mysteries that are only hinted at in the first book.



LUCKY CHARACTER GUIDE

PART 1



LUCIANA ARMSTRONG, AKA LUCKY

Played by **Anya Taylor-Joy** in the Apple TV series

Lucky Armstrong is a tough, preternaturally talented grifter with a fierce sense of loyalty—raised by an equally charming grifter father figure who taught her that absolutely everyone and everything has a price. Although Lucky makes questionable moral choices, the childhood chapters in the book (which act as a kind of prequel companion to the show) reveal how little choice she really had, and how hard-won and unconventional her underlying goodness truly is.

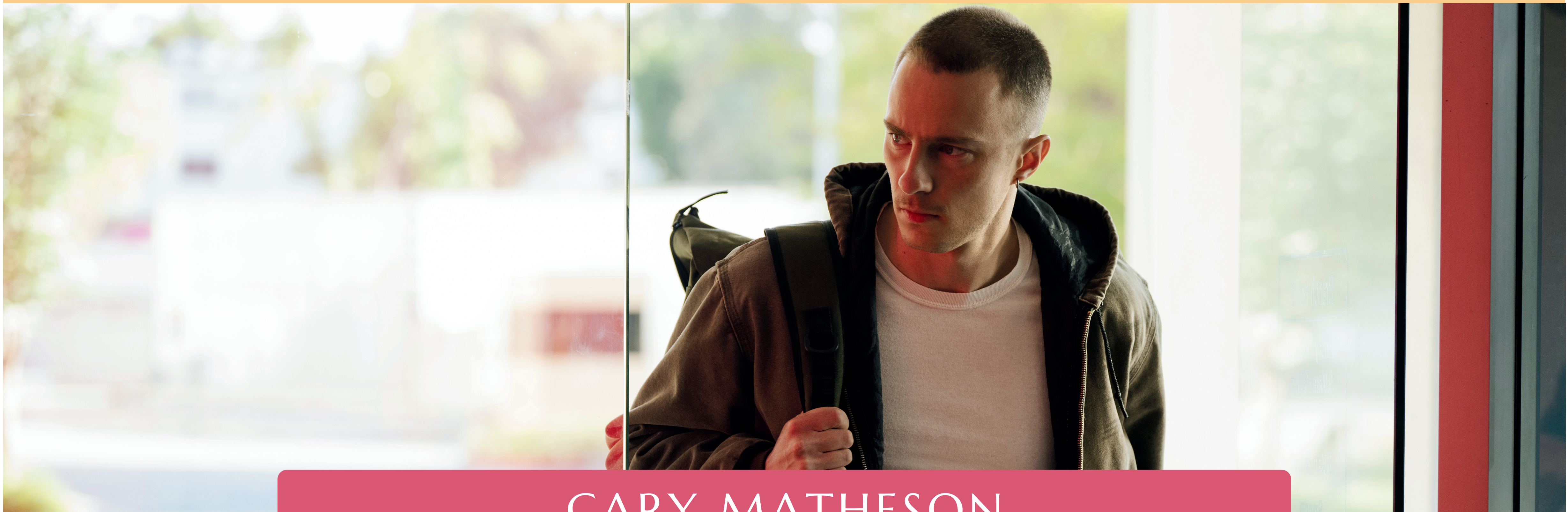
Lucky is the friend you would call in the middle of the night if you were in trouble with the law and needed to be bailed out, talked down, or helped to disappear for a while. If you manage to earn Lucky's trust and befriend her in a genuine way, you've accomplished something enormous, and gained a fiercely loyal ally for life—paradoxical as that might sound when you're talking about a con artist!

Lucky's emotions run deep. She longs for love just as intensely as she resists needing anyone or anything, and her desire to be "normal" is as heartbreaking as it is relatable. She's resilient and determined, and her ability to keep going, especially when the odds are stacked against her, is nothing short of remarkable. She's a potent and rare blend of cunning and grit, softness and soul, the kind of woman you'd want to have a drink with and then follow anywhere, because she remains the sharpest mind in any room she walks into.



LUCKY CHARACTER GUIDE

PART 2



CARY MATHESON

Played by **Drew Starkey** in the Apple TV series

Cary Matheson is Lucky's boyfriend, and we first meet him in her teenage chapters as they fall in love, watching, almost helplessly, as she hands her heart to someone we can sense she shouldn't fully trust, even as we're drawn in by his charm, too. When I think of Cary, I hear The Strumbellas' song "My Own Worst Enemy," because he is brimming with potential and weighed down by immense childhood trauma and emotional baggage. He loves Lucky as much as he is capable of loving anyone, but the way he was raised (and who he was raised by) means he doesn't truly have the capacity to love in a safe, steady way.

What Cary does in the book is unforgivable, and yet there is a part of Lucky that still loves him, because he is genuinely lovable: exciting, magnetic, and as brave and resilient as she is. He is almost her perfect match, but his fatal flaw is a deep character weakness that leads him to help orchestrate his own undoing—and hers. Raised by Priscilla Lachaise and a mob-boss father who was killed in a hit that may or may not have been his own mother's doing, Cary first lies to Lucky about a seemingly idyllic childhood to hide the pain and shame of what he actually endured. In truth, his mother was in and out of prison and grew ruthless and cold, and although he legitimately falls in love with Lucky, his love cannot withstand his past or the identity he has learned to inhabit.

Cary is sexy, dangerous, and thrilling to be around, and Lucky falls for him hard; he tries, he really does, to be someone different for her, but he changing his spots is a challenge he may not be equal to.



LUCKY CHARACTER GUIDE

PART 3



JOHN ARMSTRONG

Played by **Timothy Olyphant** in the Apple TV series

John Armstrong is Lucky's father and her first lesson in loving a man who is both irresistible and profoundly flawed. Like Cary, he radiates charisma and is almost impossible to resist, which means Lucky is conditioned from girlhood to equate danger and charm with love. We can never be entirely sure John is telling the truth; his stories shift and shimmer, but the version he offers is that he lost his parents in a car accident and helped raise his younger siblings, which becomes part of the mythology he uses to justify the way he lives.

John is a consummate grifter, teaching Lucky that everyone and everything has a price, yet he also gives her a sense of belonging and affection that feels like love to a child who doesn't know anything different. His influence threads through every choice Lucky makes, even when she's trying to escape him, and the push-pull between wanting his approval and needing to break free lies at the emotional center of her journey.



LUCKY CHARACTER GUIDE

PART 4



PRISCILLA LACHAISE

Played by **Annette Bening** in the Apple TV series

Priscilla Lachaise is Cary's mother and one of the most formidable people in Lucky's life: a woman who has survived by becoming sharper, colder, and more ruthless than almost anyone around her. Once in and out of prison and ultimately hardened by a lifetime orbiting organized crime, Priscilla learned early that vulnerability is dangerous and that love is a luxury she can rarely afford. She raised Cary amid secrets, violence, and shifting loyalties, shaping him into the dangerously charismatic man Lucky can't help falling for and tying Lucky and Priscilla together in a fraught, almost inevitable way.

To Lucky, Priscilla is both warning and mirror: a woman who has had to armor herself to survive, but who still has buried flashes of feeling, especially where her son is concerned. Their relationship crackles with tension, wary respect, and a shared understanding of what it costs to live outside the rules, so that every scene between them feels like an emotional showdown as much as a plot twist.