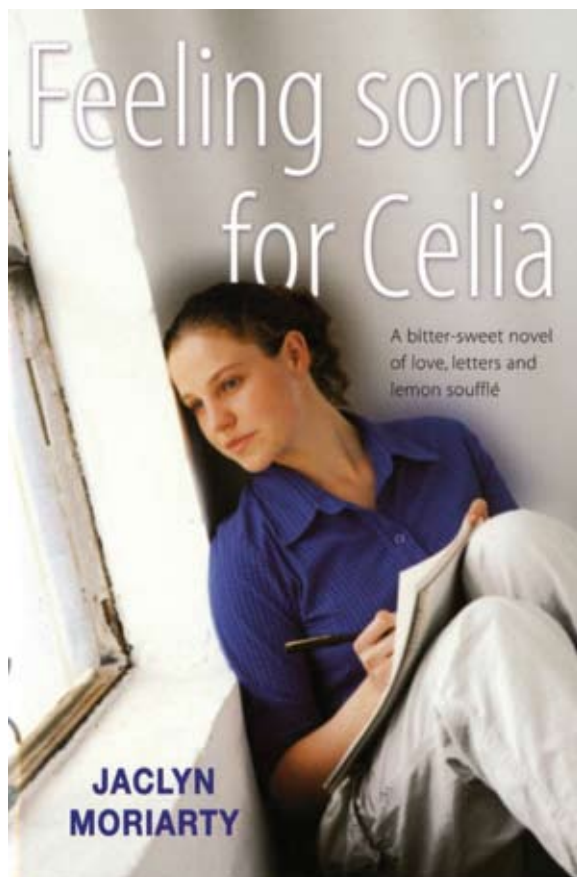


# Feeling Sorry for Celia

## Jaclyn Moriarty

### Teachers' Notes



This set of teachers' notes provides a part-by-part framework for study of Jaclyn Moriarty's award-winning and bestselling novel, *Feeling Sorry for Celia*.

Each section is broken into exercises and questions under the headings:

#### **Something to think about**

(comprehension and stimulus based on the chapter)

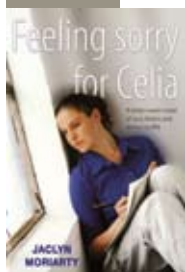
#### **Keeping track**

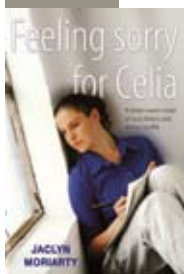
(activities designed to be maintained and updated throughout reading)

#### **Be creative**

(fun, creative activities based on the chapter)

Teachers should be encouraged to springboard from the suggestions into further work with which the class will identify and enjoy. Teachers should simplify, modify and extend any activities to suit the needs and interests of their class.





## Synopsis

Life is pretty complicated for Elizabeth Clarry. Her best friend, Celia, keeps disappearing, her absent father suddenly reappears, and her communication with her mother consists entirely of wacky notes left on the fridge. On top of everything else, because her English teacher wants to rekindle the Joy of the Envelope, a Complete and Utter Stranger knows more about Elizabeth than anyone else.

But Elizabeth is on the verge of some major changes – she may lose her best friend, find a wonderful new friend, kiss the sexiest guy alive, and run in a marathon. So much can happen in the time it takes to write a letter . . .

## Part One

### Something to think about

- Elizabeth receives letters from The Association of Teenagers. Through these letters, what might you say are the expectations of being a teenager?
- Take notice of the relationship between Elizabeth and her mother.
  - What do we learn about Elizabeth’s mother?
  - What sort of character is she?
- How do Christina and Elizabeth ‘meet’?
  - What sort of character is Christina?
  - What do we learn about her?
  - What assumptions does she make about private schools?
- What impressions of Celia have you received from Part One?
- Jaclyn Moriarty cleverly reveals many plots and subplots throughout this novel via the use of the text type: letters.
  - With a partner discuss how effectively this is done.
  - What makes this an ingenious way to write a teenage novel? What might the difficulties be?

### Keeping track

- Maintain a ‘plot line’ for the novel for each of the plots in the novel. Constantly update this throughout your reading.
- Discuss with a partner or your class what the letters from the various imaginary associations and clubs might represent to Elizabeth? Maintain a table throughout your reading:

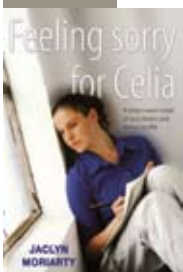
Elizabeth receives letters from:	This may represent:
_____	_____
The Association of Teenagers	her insecurities about not being ‘cool’

- Take notice of the relationship between Elizabeth and her father. Describe it. Maintain a list of information about Elizabeth’s father as we learn it.

What we learn about Elizabeth’s father:	Page Number:
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Be creative

- On page 29, the Association writes, ‘You’re writing letters to that Christina person **PRETENDING THAT YOU’RE A REAL TEENAGER**’.
  - What are the rules for being a ‘real teenager’?
  - Create a pamphlet which teaches 12 year olds how to be ‘real teenagers’.



## Part Two

### Something to think about

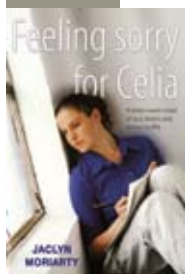
- On page 39, Celia writes, 'PS If you see my mother, can you tell her where I am?'
  - What does this suggest about Celia? What does it suggest about the relationship she has with her mother?
  - Describe the relationship between Elizabeth's mother and father? Find examples (quotes) to support your description.
  - What are you beginning to notice about Elizabeth's relationship with Celia and her relationship with Christina?
    - Which relationship seems more fulfilling for Elizabeth?
    - Discuss the irony of this with a partner or your class.

### Keeping track

- We learn a lot in this section about Elizabeth's father.
  - Update your list.
- Begin a comparison chart that compares Christina to Celia.
  - Brainstorm some headings (eg: appearance, likes, family) and tabulate the information.
  - Maintain this throughout your reading.

### Be creative

- Elizabeth describes the dinner she has with her father.
  - Imagine you are Elizabeth's father. Write a description of the evening from his point of view.
- Describe Saxon Walker. Draw a picture of what you think he looks like.



## Part Three

### Something to think about

- Re-read this section carefully.
  - What are Celia's letters beginning to reveal?
  - What do we begin to notice about the relationship between Saxon and Elizabeth?
  - What impressions do we get about Saxon on page 88?
- Why do you think Elizabeth has decided to write to her stepbrother?

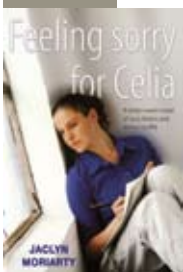
### Keeping track

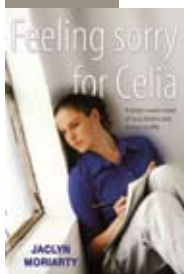
- On page 94: 'Saxon's aunt is playing a very violent video game in the other corner'.
  - Some of the characters in the novel tend to break traditional stereotypes.
  - Brainstorm under the following headings with a partner:

Traditional stereotypes of:	The stereotype is presented in this novel as:
Mothers	
Fathers	
Teenage Girls	
Teenage Boys	

### Be creative

- Imagine you had a long lost sibling/relative you have just found out about.
  - Write them a letter.
  - What would you say? How would you describe your family/ friends/life/experiences/ personality to a complete stranger?





## Part Four

### Something to think about

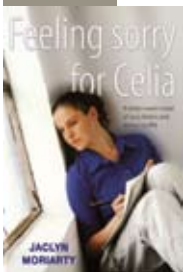
- ‘You must be the nicest, most generous best friend in the world.’ Page 102.
  - Discuss the irony of Christina’s comment with a partner.
- Re-read page 104.
  - How does Christina describe her ‘first time’ with Derek?
  - Why do you think she wants to break up with him?
- On page 106, the doctor asks Christina if she had started ‘discussing these issues with her parents?’
  - Can you relate to this?
  - What makes her reaction funny?
  - Why do you think it is often difficult for teenagers to talk to their parents about sex?
- On page 108 Christina worries that Elizabeth might ‘think I’m out of my tree. You probably won’t want to ever write to me again.’
  - What is interesting about Christina’s opinion of friendship?
  - What has she failed to realize?
- On page 112, Elizabeth writes, ‘Something happened to me but I don’t really feel like talking about it’.
  - What do you think has happened?
- On Page 119 we are told what has happened.
  - Describe Elizabeth’s feelings here.

### Keeping track

- Elizabeth ‘receives’ letters from the Best Friends Club and the Young Romance Association amongst others in this section.
  - What do these letters reveal what about Elizabeth feels?
  - Update your list in your books.

### Be creative

- Re-read pg 117-122.
  - Re-tell the story from Saxon or Celia’s point of view.
  - You might write a letter or even act it out in a group.



## Part Five

### Something to think about

- Elizabeth receives a letter from a stranger.
  - Who do you think the letter is from?
- What do you think Elizabeth's insecurities might be at this point in the novel?
- On page 135 Elizabeth relates her concerns about Celia.
  - Make a list of the 'symptoms' Elizabeth notices in Celia.
- Complete the following thinking skills 'W' chart for the poetry evening (page 136).

#### W CHART (Ralph Pirozzo, 2003)

Looks like	Feels like	Sounds like	Tastes like	Thinks like

- What might the letters on page 150-151 reveal about Elizabeth's feelings?

### Keeping track

- Using the table below, compare Celia and Elizabeth's families/home lives.
  - Develop this into an analytical paragraph/essay discussing the similarities and differences of the two girls.

Christina's home life	Elizabeth's home life

- Make a list of the 'clues' given on pages 155-156 which are attempting to solve the mystery of the anonymous note writer.

### Be creative

- Imagine you were sending anonymous notes to someone.
  - Who would it be? What would it say?
  - Why do you think people choose to be anonymous?
  - Have a class discussion about how this might or might not relate to the popularity of chat rooms on the internet.



## Part Six

### Something to think about

- How have Elizabeth's feelings towards Celia changed? Find evidence to support your claims.
- What does Elizabeth think she learns about her father on page 178. What reaction does her mother have?
- What does Celia's letter suggest on page 181-182. What is your reaction to this?

### Keeping track

- Complete 'profile cards' for each of the Brookfield Boys according to Elizabeth. You might like to use headings such as hair, personality, dress, likes, dislikes.
- Update your list of 'clues' of the anonymous note writer.

### Be creative

- Elizabeth recounts her sailing trip on pages 172-173.
  - What might Elizabeth's father perspective of the sailing trip be?
  - Write a letter or diary entry as Elizabeth's father recounting his experience with Elizabeth on the boat.

## Part Seven

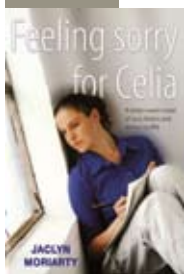
### Something to think about

- Sum up Elizabeth's feelings about Celia in this chapter. How has the relationship changed?
- This is quite a funny chapter. What is funny about the meeting between Elizabeth and Christina?
  - What techniques does Jaclyn Moriarty use to make us laugh?
  - Consider the use of the Instant Replay Society. How is this clever technique employed by the author?

### Be creative

- Imagine Celia writes a letter to Elizabeth when she is in hospital. What might it say?
  - Write the letter.





## Part Eight

### Something to think about

- Re-read page 200.
  - What does this letter reveal about Elizabeth's mother? How does she feel about Elizabeth's father?
- What do the letters in this chapter reveal about Elizabeth's frame of mind?
- On page 205, Elizabeth writes, 'But I do kind of like the way she hates Saxon's mum'.
  - Why do you think Elizabeth feels this way?
- What does Elizabeth piece together about the identity of The Stranger? How?

### Keeping track

- Re-read page 206.
  - How has the relationship between Elizabeth and her father changed? Use examples to support your claims.

### Be creative

- On page 197, Christina writes, 'AND you stayed up all night talking with me'.
  - Script the first meeting between Elizabeth and Christina

## Part Nine/Ten

### Something to think about

- What do we learn about Elizabeth's stepbrother in Part Nine?
- We also learn of something quite significant.
  - What is it?
  - How does her mother react? Why?
- Re-read pages 226- 227.
  - What do we learn (via the letters) about Elizabeth's feelings about the party?
  - Do you think the use of letters is a more effective way of revealing a character's feelings in a novel (as opposed to a basic narrative)?
    - What makes this technique difficult? Easy?

### Keeping track

- Throughout the novel we are informed of events retrospectively through the use of letters.
  - Consider the use of Elizabeth's mother's absence in this chapter.
  - How else could the reader be informed of the party considering Elizabeth couldn't write to Christina?
- Consider the letters during Elizabeth's half marathon.
  - What do they reveal?
  - Update your list.

### Be creative

- In groups of three, roleplay the meeting with Ricky Clarry, Elizabeth and her mother.
- On Pg 240-241, the Young Romance Society writes to Elizabeth.
  - Imagine you are Jared writing to a friend.
  - Write the letter recounting what happened on his and Elizabeth's first date.



## Part Eleven/Twelve

### Something to think about

- How can we tell that Elizabeth is feeling happier in this chapter?
- On page 261 Elizabeth replies to the Association of Teenagers.
  - What does her letter suggest?
- What do you think Elizabeth means on page 262 when she says: 'Write to me again? I won't even open the envelope'?

### Be creative

- If you could write a letter to your inner worries and thoughts, what would it say?
  - Write this letter.
  - Do you think it would be a worthwhile process?

