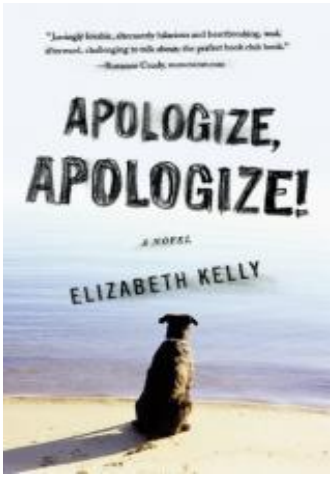
Apologize, Apologize!

by Elizabeth Kelly



About the Book

Apologize, Apologize! takes us into the perversely charmed world of the Flanagans and their son, Collie (named after his parents? favorite breed of dog). Collie comes of age on Martha?s Vineyard, trying to make sense of his wildly wealthy, hyper-articulate, and resolutely crazy family members: a philandering father, incorrigible brother, pigeon-racing uncle, radical activist mother, and a domineering media mogul grandfather (accused of being a murderer by Collie?s mother). As Collie searches for his place in the world, he suffers insurmountable loss and grapples for bravery as he struggles to cope with people he has no choice but to love.

Discussion Guide

1. Throughout this account of Collie Flanagan?s life (so far., he appears to be the only conventional --- or perhaps even sane --- member of his family. However, the novel is told from his perspective. Do you feel like you can trust what he?s saying?

2. What do you think of Collie?s mother? Does she seem to have lived a life of passion, or is she defined only by her rebellion against her aristocratic roots?

3. Should Collie have gone in after Bingo and the others, knowing as he did that there was no hope?

4. In one interview, Elizabeth Kelly referred to Bingo as ?representative of full-blown adolescence, but in all its glory,? and as something of a heroic character as well. What do you make of him?

5. Elizabeth Kelly has clearly had a lot of fun creating the hilarious and often manic characters at the heart of this novel. How did you react to the various Flanagan family blowouts? Did you more often cringe or laugh out loud?

6. Talk about the role of money in this novel: who has it and who doesn?t; how it can be a motivator, or stunt one?s ambitions; how it insulates the Flanagans, yet forces them into the limelight; and so on.

7. ?Dignity is the last refuge of scoundrels,? Collie?s father was known to say, and he certainly was one to put himself into undignified positions, despite his charm and sharp clothes. What do you make of him as a man, and as a father?

8. Who is your favorite character in this novel, and why?

9. Collie and Bingo have a relationship that?s not always straightforward, yet at its heart is a strong sibling love. What does each expect, and receive (or not), from the other?

10. What was Collie hoping to achieve in El Salvador? Did he change as a result of his experiences there?

11. What are Collie Flanagan?s personal strengths? Were there small events that stood out for you as monumental in terms of proving his character?

12. More than any other member of the Flanagans, Collie has a close --- if complex --- relationship with his grandfather, Peregrine Lowell. Why is that so? How has their relationship developed by the end of the novel?

13. The Flanagans inhabit a world of elite privilege, yet are so self-absorbed you can?t help but wonder whether they?d even notice if the rest of humanity ceased to exist. Does Collie rise above all that, or is he just like the rest of them?

14. Collie?s father has a knack for showing up wildly drunk for even the most staid of events, including the funerals held for his wife and son. Talk about how his disappearances and arrivals function in the novel.

15. Whenever anyone talks to Collie about the events of the day Bingo and his mother died, they always get the details wrong. What is Kelly saying about living up to the expectations of others in this novel? Should Collie have stood up for himself more often?

16. The Flanagans are a wild and wildly humorous bunch, and even their seemingly unwarranted jabs at Collie are terrific. Discuss the role of cutting humor and over-the-top judgment in the novel.

17. At the end of the novel, Collie appears to have come to terms with his family, or at least seems to have achieved some measure of peace. What does the future hold for Collie Flanagan?

Author Bio

Elizabeth Kelly is the bestselling author of THE LAST SUMMER OF THE CAMPERDOWNS (finalist for the New England Society Book Award) and APOLOGIZE, APOLOGIZE! She lives in Merrickville, Ontario, with her husband, five dogs and three cats.

Apologize, Apologize!

by Elizabeth Kelly

Publication Date: March 30, 2010
Paperback: 336 pages
Publisher: Twelve
ISBN-10: 0446406155
ISBN-13: 9780446406154