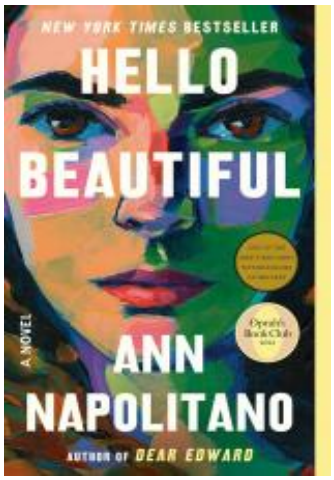
Hello Beautiful

by Ann Napolitano



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of DEAR EDWARD comes a poignant and engrossing family story that asks: Can love make a broken person whole?

William Waters grew up in a house silenced by tragedy, where his parents could hardly bear to look at him, much less love him. So when he meets the spirited and ambitious Julia Padavano in his freshman year of college, it?s as if the world has lit up around him. With Julia comes her family, as she and her three sisters are inseparable: Sylvie, the family?s dreamer, is happiest with her nose in a book; Cecelia is a free-spirited artist; and Emeline patiently takes care of them all. With the Padavanos, William experiences a newfound contentment; every moment in their house is filled with loving chaos.

But then darkness from William?s past surfaces, jeopardizing not only Julia?s carefully orchestrated plans for their future, but the sisters? unshakeable devotion to one another. The result is a catastrophic family rift that changes their lives for generations. Will the loyalty that once rooted them be strong enough to draw them back together when it matters most?

An exquisite homage to Louisa May Alcott?s timeless classic, LITTLE WOMEN, HELLO BEAUTIFUL is a profoundly moving portrait of what is possible when we choose to love someone not in spite of who they are, but because of it.

Discussion Guide

1. Who is your favorite character in this book? Who did you most identify with, and why?

2. Discuss the rift that occurs between William, Julia and Sylvie, and the choices each character makes to contribute to that rift. If you were involved in a similar situation, what might you have done?

3. How did the ending make you feel? What do you think might happen for William and Alice next?

4. Ann Napolitano has said that HELLO BEAUTIFUL is an homage to Louisa May Alcott?s LITTLE WOMEN. Have you read LITTLE WOMEN --- and, if so, what traces of Alcott?s classic novel of sisterhood do you see in Napolitano?s?

5. HELLO BEAUTIFUL is initially narrated from three perspectives: William?s, Julia?s and Sylvie?s. Why do you think the author chose these particular characters to tell the story? Whose voice did you enjoy or relate to the most? How did you feel when Alice?s voice entered the story?

6. Discuss how mental health plays a role in the story of HELLO BEAUTIFUL. Did William?s depressive experience feel ?real? to you, for example? What about his parents??

7. Sylvie imagined her life to be full of ?third doors,? or unexpected ways of living that allow her to choose her own path. What third doors can you see in your own life? Have you ever wanted to make an unexpected decision? What did you choose?

8. Charlie described his daughter Julia as his ?rocket? --- an ambitious, independent woman who follows her own dreams. What about his other daughters: Do you think they fit that description as well, and how? What about Rose? You may take this opportunity to talk about the mother-daughter relationships in the novel as well.

9. HELLO BEAUTIFUL highlighted a series of romantic partnerships: Charlie and Rose?s, Julia and William?s, Sylvie and William?s, Emeline and Josie?s. Which relationship do you think was the ideal in terms of love and connection, and why? Which were the most challenging?

10. In addition to romantic relationships, HELLO BEAUTIFUL featured different types of nuclear families: William?s; the Padavanos; Julia and Alice?s; and the ?super-duplex? where Cecelia, Izzy, Emeline and Josie live together. Talk about what family looks like in the pages of this novel. Which family appeals to you most?

11. Discuss the character of Alice. In what ways was she like her mother? Her father? Sylvie, the aunt she doesn?t remember?

12. While family was at the center of most of these characters? lives, friendships were also of great, life-affirming importance. Kent and Carrie, for example, were vital to William?s and Alice?s existence. What do you think friends add to our lives that families don?t or can?t? Do you have a best friend like Kent or Carrie?

13. The characters in HELLO BEAUTIFUL keep secrets from each other, sometimes for years. Almost all of these secrets eventually come to light. Have you ever kept a secret from a loved one? Do you agree with the reasons why Emeline, Julia and Rose kept secrets from theirs?

14. When Sylvie finds out that she has cancer, she worries more about William than herself. Why? Discuss their relationship and the obstacles they faced. Would you make the same choices as Sylvie if you were in her position?

15. There are three mothers in HELLO BEAUTIFUL: Rose, Julia and Cecelia. Compare each of their parenting styles and decisions. Do you relate to one of them more than the others? Why or why not? What does a ?good? mother look like in this novel?

16. Charlie is an imperfect father, but a beloved member of his community. Think about his relationships with his daughters --- especially with Julia and Sylvie. How did his love help to shape them? In what ways was Charlie a ?good? or a ?bad? father?

17. Over the course of the novel, several of the characters experience tragedy and loss. What do you think the novel is saying about resilience and hope in the face of difficult times? And how, if at all, does this messaging speak to you?

18. William realizes that he never felt loved by his parents. He experiences one type of love from Julia, and another type of love from Sylvie. Talk about the different expressions of love in this novel. What do you think this novel is saying about what love really is?

Author Bio

Ann Napolitano is the bestselling author of HELLO BEAUTIFUL, which was selected as Oprah?s 100th Book Club pick; DEAR EDWARD, an instant *New York Times* bestseller, a Read with Jenna selection, and an Apple TV+ series; A GOOD HARD LOOK; and WITHIN ARM'S REACH. For seven years, Napolitano was the associate editor of the literary magazine *One Story*, and she received an MFA from New York University. She has taught fiction writing at Brooklyn College?s MFA program, New York University?s School of Continuing and Professional Studies, and Gotham Writers Workshop.

Hello Beautiful
by Ann Napolitano

Publication Date: November 19, 2024
Genres: Fiction, Women's Fiction
Paperback: 416 pages
Publisher: Dial Press Trade Paperback
ISBN-10: 0593243757
ISBN-13: 9780593243756