

HELLO

Ann Napolitano

(AUTHOR)

Hello Beautiful

(BOOK TITLE)

DATE	TIME
OCT 24 2023	8:00PM ET

BEAUTIFUL

Book Club
EST. 2019
HOLLY FURTICK BOOK CLUB

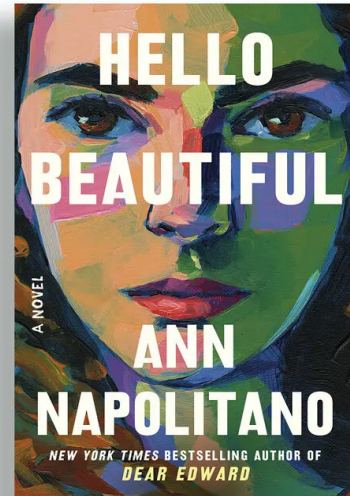
A NOVEL

NAPOLITANO

Book Club

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HOLLY FURTICK
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Ann Napolitano was the Associate Editor of *One Story* literary magazine from 2014-2020. She received an MFA from New York University; she has taught fiction writing for Brooklyn College's MFA program, New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies and for Gotham Writers' Workshop. In November 2019, Ann was long-listed for the Simpson/Joyce Carol Oates Literary Prize. Ann lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two children.

ABOUT THE BOOK

- An emotionally layered and engrossing story of a family 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 it's a relief when his skill on the basketball court earns him a scholarship to college, far away from his childhood home. He soon meets Julia Padavano, a spirited and ambitious young woman who surprises William with her appreciation of his quiet steadiness. With Julia comes her family; she is inseparable from her three younger sisters: Sylvie, the dreamer, is happiest with her nose in a book and imagines a future different from the expected path of wife and mother; Cecelia, the family's artist; and Emeline, who patiently takes care of all of them. Happily, the Padavanos fold Julia's new boyfriend into their loving, chaotic household.
- But then darkness from William's past surfaces, jeopardizing not only Julia's carefully orchestrated plans for their future, but the sisters' unshakeable loyalty 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?
- Vibrating with tenderness, *Hello Beautiful* is a gorgeous, profoundly moving portrait

of what's possible when we choose to love someone not in spite of who they are, but because of it.

SETTING/LOCATION

- Newton, MA (suburb of Boston) - Where William is born and grows up
- Chicago
 - Northwestern Univ - where William and Julia went to school
 - Pilsen (suburb) - Where Padavano's and William live
- NYC - Julia and Alice move there, Alice grows up here
- Boston Univ - where Alice went to school

CHARACTERS

- William Waters - Basketball player - First married to Julia and then married Sylvie. Alice's dad.
- Julia Padavano - Oldest Padavano sister - Type A - Always has a vision and plan. Divorces her husband and leaves her home for New York City
- Charlie Padavano - Father of the Padavano sisters, Rose's husband
- Rose Padavano - Mother of the Padavano sisters, Charlie's wife. Avid gardener.
- Sylvie Padavano - Second Padavano sister - Loves books and becomes a librarian. Marries William after Julia divorces him
- Cecilia Padavano - third Padavano sister - Emeline's twin - Artist - Paints murals all over her city.
- Emeline Padavano - fourth Padavano sister - Cecilia's twin - loves children and opens a daycare
- Kent - Williams's long-time buddy. Cares for him through many different seasons and life struggles.
- Alice Padavano - William and Julia's daughter.
- Isabella (Izzy) Pavano - Cecilia's daughter that she had as a teenager. Only a few months older than Alice.
- Arash - Physio at Northwestern who mentors William with sports injuries
- Washington and Gus - a couple other friends of William and Kent's who were consistently supporting him
- Caroline Waters - William's sister who died as a child

THINGS I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK

- I loved the realness of the characters. That there wasn't one that you loved or hated. It was like watching real people make decisions.
- I love the theme of bitterness and forgiveness
- The homage to Little Women
- The family that William found in the Pavanos and his team
- "When an old person dies," Kent said, "even if that person is wonderful, he or she

is still somewhat ready, and so are the people who loved them. They're like old trees, whose roots have loosened in the ground. They fall gently. But when someone like your Aunt Sylvie dies—before her time—her roots get pulled out and the ground is ripped up. Everyone nearby is in danger of being knocked over.”

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- Who do you think this book is about?
- Do you have a favorite character?
- How about Rose?
- Do you think William fell in love with Julia or her family?
- What do you think of Sylvie marrying her sister's ex-husband?
- What do you think of how Julia handled talking to Alice about her father when she was a child?

MEMORABLE SCENES

- Pg 1-8 - William's sister dying and its impact on his childhood
- Pg 4 - William finding basketball (neighborhood)
- Pg 38 - William and Julia get married
- Pg 42 - Cecilia tells Sylvie she's pregnant on the day of Julia and William's wedding.
- Pg 46 - William's parents give him a \$10k check he doesn't cash
- Pg 60 - Julia decides having a baby with William will fix their family
- Pg 66-67 - Izzy is born, and Charlie dies after seeing Izzy right after
- Pg 84 - Rose decides to move to Florida
- Pg 97 - Sylvie and William sit on the bench together
- Pg 106 - Alice is born
- Pg 131 - William goes AWOL from his courses and then his marriage
- Pg 151 - Williams tries to commit suicide in the lake, everyone goes to search for him and finds him there
- Pg 184 - Julia moves with Alice to NYC
- Pg 218 - Sylvie and William start secret dating
- Pg 224 - Kent makes Sylvie and William be honest about their relationship
- Pg 253 - William discovers his love of being a Basketball Coach and working with injuries
- Pg 254 - William and Sylvie get married, and Cecelia and Emmeline build the super-duplex (pg 274)
- Pg 257 - Julia tells Alice her father is dead
- Pg 290 - Sylvie gets diagnosed with a tumor, and William calls Julia (pg 298)
- Pg 316 - Julia flies out to meet with Sylvie the 1st time
- Pg 328 - Julia tells Alice about her father, that he's alive and married to Sylvie
- Pg 352 - Alice flies to Pilsen to find her father, finds out Sylvia died
- Pg 379 - Julia and Alice talk to William

MEMORABLE QUOTES

- Pg 8 - William had the strange thought that he might never see his parents again—that they'd only ever had one child, and it wasn't him.
- Pg 9 - Later, William would look back at this moment and know that this was when he fell for her. Or, more accurately, when his body fell for her.
- Pg 13 - Kent said, "Sometimes I have to remind myself that it doesn't matter if the coach benches me or bawls me out because he doesn't appreciate my beautiful game. I'm going to med school. He can't stop my future from happening."
- Pg 23 - Charlie regularly told his daughters that a job did not make a person. "What makes you, Daddy?" Emeline had asked a few years earlier in response to this comment. She'd spoken with all of her little-girl sweetness; it was commonly agreed that she was the gentlest and most earnest of the four girls. "Your smile," Charlie had said. "The night sky. The flowering dogwood in front of Mrs. Ceccione's house." Julia had listened and thought: That's all nonsense. And useless to Mom, who's doing strangers' laundry every week to pay the bills.
- Pg 72 - "It's because you know that more is possible that you'll always see the pointlessness in following a stupid rule or clocking in and out of a boring class. Most people can't see that distinction, so they just do as they're told. Of course, this makes them bored and irritated, but they think that's the human condition. You and I are lucky enough to see that it doesn't have to be that way."
- Pg 72 - "We're not separated from the world by our own edges." Charlie set down his beer glass, empty now, and rubbed his hand up and down his arm, as an example of one of his edges. "We're part of the sky, and the rocks in your mother's garden, and that old man who sleeps by the train station. We're all interconnected, and when you see that, you see how beautiful life is. Your mother and sisters don't have that awareness. Not yet, anyway. They believe they're contained in their bodies, in the biographical facts of their lives."
- Pg 73 - Sylvie ached at how this priest and all the people at the wake defined Charlie with his biographical facts, when he had been so much more. He was vast, and beautiful, and more present in the gift of baby formula to a young mother than in any day he'd spent at the paper factory. He was his acts of kindness, and his love for his daughters, and the twenty minutes he'd spent with Sylvie behind the grocer's that evening.
- Pg 99 - When Julia gazed at William, she was trying to see the man she wanted him to be. She couldn't see, or didn't want to see, who he actually was.
- Pg 162 - "I think you think I'm still in danger. But I'm not. I won't do it again," he said. "I promise." Kent studied him from beneath lowered eyelids. "I want more than that, you know. I want you to feel better. To love your life."
- Pg 164 - She'd had her eye on who William would become, after the next job offer or once he had a PhD after his name. He didn't blame his wife for this conditional acceptance; he'd grown up with parents who'd never accepted him at all.
- Pg 229 - Sylvie wondered, looking at the mural, if bravery was wedded to loss: You

did the unthinkable thing and paid a price.

- Pg 285 - “but anyone that dresses and does their hair as carefully as your mom does every single day is unhappy on the inside. She’s trying to hide all her messiness, and I want better than that for you.”
- Pg 330 - but the young Alice had grown so tall that no one ever thought to help her, and she prided herself on never asking for help. Everyone—men and women—rushed to Carrie’s aid, even when she was perfectly fine, because she was cute and five feet tall. But the assumption was that Alice never needed help.
- Pg 350 - He’d always assumed openness was synonymous with danger and that if he wasn’t holding on tight to the new life he’d built, it would blow away. But with the barriers down, he’d discovered that life became bigger.
- Pg 360 - When your love for a person is so profound that it’s part of who you are, then the absence of the person becomes part of your DNA, your bones, and your skin.
- Pg 371 - “When an old person dies,” Kent said, “even if that person is wonderful, he or she is still somewhat ready, and so are the people who loved them. They’re like old trees, whose roots have loosened in the ground. They fall gently. But when someone like your aunt Sylvie dies—before her time—her roots get pulled out and the ground is ripped up. Everyone nearby is in danger of being knocked over.”
- Pg 373 - My mom said she forgave her because she wanted to keep loving her.
- Pg 378 - “Grief is love.” Now Alice thought: Forgiveness is too.
- Pg 379 - The onset of grief bore no resemblance to his experience with depression. Depression meant disconnection, shutting down, a dangerous quiet. Now William’s feelings whipped around inside him like a flailing water hose.
- Pg 382 - William said, “For a long time, Sylvie knew me better than I knew myself. I think sometimes”—now it was his turn to pause—“we need another pair of eyes. We need the people around us.”