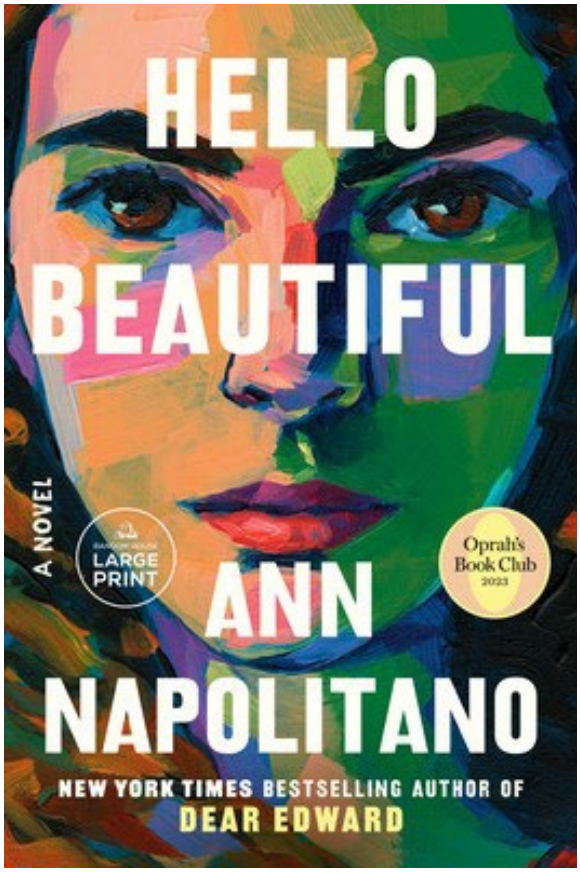
book discussion kits

Hello Beautiful
by Ann Napolitano

Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano



Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions

Book summary

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 he's relieved 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 steadiness.

With Julia comes her family; she is inseparable from her three younger sisters: Sylvie, a dreamer, is happiest with her nose in a book and imagines a future different from the expected path of wife and mother; Cecelia is an artist; and Emeline patiently takes care of all of them. Happily, the Padavanos fold Julia's new boyfriend into their loving, chaotic household.

But when darkness from William's past surfaces, it jeopardizes 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 love 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.

(Source: https://annnapolitano.com/)

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Meet the Author

Ann Napolitano's novel, Hello Beautiful, was published by Dial Press in March 2023 and was an instant New York Times bestseller and the 100th Oprah Book Club pick. The novel will be published by Viking Penguin in the United Kingdom in July 2023, and currently has twenty-six international publishers.



Dear Edward was published by Dial Press in January 2020 and was an instant New York Times bestseller, a Read with Jenna selection, and was released on February 3rd as an Apple TV+ series starring Connie Britton. The novel currently has twenty-seven international publishers. It was named one of the best books of 2020 by The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, Real Simple, Fast Company, Women's World, Parade, LibraryReads and Amazon.

Napolitano is also the author of the novels A Good Hard Look and Within Arm's Reach. She 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.

A Good Hard Look was published in the United States by Penguin Press. The novel appeared on the Southern Independent bestseller list, on one of NPR's Best of 2011 lists, and was also an Indie Next Pick and an Okra Pick.

Her first novel, Within Arm's Reach, was published in the United States by Crown Publishing, in the United Kingdom by Time Warner Books/Virago, in Spain by Ediciones Salamandra, and in Germany by Verlagsgruppe Droemer Weltbild. The novel was adapted and staged as a theatrical production in New York City in 2014.

Ann lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two children.

(Source: https://annnapolitano.com/*)*

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Discussion Questions

1. Hello Beautiful is a homage to Little Women. What are your thoughts about homage storytelling? Were you a fan of Little Women prior to reading this novel?
2. While the novel is very much focused on the four sisters—especially Julia and Sylvie—the story starts off with William's tragic past. Why was it important to focus on William in the beginning?
3. Let's talk about the four sisters and their different personalities. Do you feel you're similar to any of the sisters? And if you come from a family of sisters—how is your family dynamic compared to the ones displayed in the novel?
4. What drew Julia and William to one another?
5. Sylvie is very much a dreamer. In what ways was Sylvie similar to their father?
6. Julia is very focused and has her life all mapped out and even picks out a career for William. After dealing with a hard background, William is grateful he's no longer alone. Why were these two not a fit in the end?
7. Do you think William ever did love Julia or was it more about being welcomed in by her family?
8. In what ways did William's traumatic upbringing impact him and his relationships?
9. William has been working on a book and when Julia reads it, she's horrified. Instead of finding a polished, studious effort: it really showcase William's insecurities and feeling lost. How did reading this book change Julia's opinion about William?
10. And on the same note, why did Sylvie feel a connection with William after she read his book?

11. When he finds out he's going to be a father, he's not thrilled and doesn't seem to put much effort when Alice is born. After his lies catch up with him, William leaves Julia and his daughter Alice and tries to commit suicide. The basketball team and Sylvie end up rescuing him. What were your thoughts as this all unfolded?
12. Why did William give up custody to his daughter?
13. Julia is completely done with William and even tells Alice that her father died. Do you understand why Julia lied about William or do you think she should have told her the truth?
14. The sisters have a fierce bond. But once Sylvie falls for William—everything changes. What were your thoughts about Sylvie and William? Do you think Sylvie was in the wrong or was it undeniable true love between the two of them?
15. Julia feels betrayed and pretty much cuts off all communication with all her sisters. And as a result, Alice has no relationship with them or her cousin. Why did Julia cut ties with everyone? What would you have done if you were Julia?
16. William is not in Alice's life but she ends up looking more like him—even has his similar height. And her personality seems to align a bit more with William as well as she does struggle a bit socially. How did the absence of family impact both Alice and Julia?
17. It's eventually revealed that Sylvie has terminal cancer. Let's talk about the eventual reunion with her and Julia.
18. How will Sylvie's passing change the family for good?
19. Alice arrives to Chicago in hopes to meet with William. It takes a while but they finally talk. What did you think about their reunion? Will William remain a figure in Alice's life?

20. It's eventually revealed that William's cold shoulder to Alice was from deep-rooted insecurity—he truly thought she was better off without him. What were your thoughts about this? Do you think William is ready to finally move forward and leave the past behind?
21. What happens next for the characters?

(Source: https://bookclubchat.com)

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Recipes

Chicago-Style Italian Beef Sandwiches

Ingredients:



- 3 lb chuck roast, trimmed of fat and cut into large hunks
- 1 envelop Italian salad dressing mix
- 8 oz pepperoncini slices, plus extra for serving
- 8 oz giardiniera, plus extra for serving
- 1 can beef broth
- provolone cheese slices
- Sub rolls

Directions:

Place chuck roast in crock pot, sprinkle with salad dressing mix. Add the peppers, a splash of juice from the jar, giardiniera and beef broth. Stir together. Cook on low for 9 hours, or until meat shreds easily with a fork. Shred, then put meat back in the crockpot to cook on low for an additional hour. Serve the meat on a split bun, topped with provolone cheese. Top with additional peppers and giardiniera.

(Source: https://www.cookingthebooksblog.com/)

Recipes Continuation

Vegan Californian Nachos



Ingredients:

- 1 large bag tortilla chips
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces ground seitan
- 1 tablespoon taco seasoning
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon chipotle powder
- Sea salt
- 1 avocado, diced
- 2 teaspoons lime juice
- Cashew Queso (see below)

Optional Toppings

- ½ cup fresh tomato salsa
- Lime Sour Cream (as seen in the Chloe Flavor cookbook)
- Finely chopped red cabbage
- Thinly sliced jalapeño
- Chopped fresh cilantro
- Pickled Red Onion (as seen in the Chloe Flavor cookbook)

For the Cashew Queso (MAKES 2½ CUPS)

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup raw cashews
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast flakes
- 4 ounces canned tomato sauce (about ⅓ cup)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons agave nectar
- In a blender, combine all the ingredients and blend until smooth. Transfer to a small saucepan and stir over medium-low heat for about 5 minutes, until warmed through and thickened.

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Pile the chips into a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Add the black beans. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes,until the beans are warmed through.Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. When it shimmers, add the seitan, taco seasoning, smoked paprika, and chipotle powder and cook for about 5 minutes, until the seitan is heated through. Add water as needed if the skillet seems dry. Season with salt.

Remove the skillet from the heat. In a small bowl, mash together the avocado and lime juice. Season with salt.

Remove the baking dish from the oven and add the Cashew Queso. Scatter over the seitan. Top off the nachos with the mashed avocado and any additional toppings you desire. Serve immediately.

(Source: https://annnapolitano.com/ from cookbook-Chloe Flavor by Chloe Coscarelli)