

book club questions

HELLO BEAUTIFUL

Discuss the significance of the title Hello Beautiful.

Discuss the significance of the cover art.

Did you like the points of view by which this novel was presented?

The novel progresses slowly in time at the beginning and end, but fast in the middle. Did you enjoy this pacing?

Whose story was this, if any one character?

Were you familiar with Ann Napolitano's writing before you read Hello Beautiful?

Were you familiar with Little Women before reading Hello Beautiful?

Compare and contrast Hello Beautiful to Little Women.

Did you like the explicit references to Little Women or do you think it should have been more implicit?

Which Padavano was most like which March family member (in Little Women)?

Were the settings of Boston, New York, and Chicago significant or could Hello Beautiful have taken place anywhere?

A lot happens in Hello Beautiful, but it's technically a character-driven novel. Did it feel more character-driven or plot-driven to you?

Discuss the different parenting styles in Hello Beautiful.

Is it significant that Rose enjoyed gardening?

Was it significant that Charlie worked at a paper factory?

Why did William enjoy the physical game of basketball so much?

Why did William enjoy the intellectual side of basketball so much?

Did anything in addition to their obvious grief make William's parents so incredibly distant?

Was William's height significant or coincidental?

Why was William interested in history?

What attracted William and Julia to each other?

Were William and Julia a good match?

What made William like the Padavanos?

Discuss the significance of the Walt Whitman quote referenced multiple times in Hello Beautiful: "I ... am not contain'd between my hat and boots[.]"

Were William and Julia too young to get married?

Why do you think William's parents didn't attend his wedding to Julia?

Why didn't William cash his parents' check?

How did William's injuries impact his life?

Discuss the ways in which Cecelia's pregnancy was revealed to each character.

Discuss the characters' reactions to Cecelia's pregnancy, including Cecelia's own reaction.

Did you find it significant that the youngest Padavano sister became a mother first?

Why did Julia get pregnant?

Discuss Rose's beliefs surrounding young motherhood.

Discuss the significance of Charlie's first words to Izzy.

Discuss the significance of Charlie's final words.

What killed Charlie?

What impact did Charlie leave on the various members of his family?

Charlie's funeral showed him to be a man of vast impact. Why was this so intriguing to William particularly?

Discuss how each character coped with grief.

Was Rose justified in her stubbornness towards Cecelia?

Why did Rose move?

Was Julia justified in letting Sylvie read William's draft of his book?

How did pregnancy and parenthood change William's and Julia's marriage?

What held William back from connecting with Alice?

Should Sylvie have been living with William and Julia?

Arash notes to William that we hardly ever ask each other how we've been hurt. What do you make of this?

Are the Padavanos a happy family?

Why did Julia react to William being missing and hospitalized as she did?

Why did Sylvie initially search for and accompany William?

Discuss the significance of hospitals in the lives of the Padavano family.

Why was William so final in his decision to "give up" Alice?

Discuss the role of secrets in the Padavano family.

When do you think Sylvie fell in love with William?

Were you surprised by Emmeline's revelation?

Were you surprised by the way Rose reacted to the news of the separation and William's hospitalization?

Discuss William's various support systems and the impact they had.

Was Julia "running away" from her problems by going to New York?

Sylvie said she deserved William. Do you think she was right (literally and/or ethically)?

Did Sylvie betray Julia?

Was William Sylvie's "one great love" or a "brutal choice" she made?

Discuss William's career trajectory.

Discuss the role of religion and particularly, "Catholic guilt," in the lives of the characters.

Did you find the length of the family rifts to be believable?

Describe Kent and his role in William's life.

Discuss Julia's and Sylvia's secret meetings.

Was Julia justified in lying to Alice about William?

What do you make of the way Julia revealed the truth about William to Alice?

Did Sylvie's illness surprise you?

Compare and contrast Alice to her parents.

Why does Alice seek safety and security so greatly?

William remains the only man in the lives of the Padavano women for the long term. What do you make of this?

Discuss the theme of forgiveness and how it occurs in Hello Beautiful.

What do you make of William's in-person reaction to Alice as an adult?

Discuss the role art plays in Hello Beautiful.

Discuss the quote: "Grief is love."

Discuss the quote: "Forgiveness is [love] too."

Charlie says, "Hello beautiful" to his daughters and William says "Hello" to adult Alice. Is this significant or coincidental?

What does Hello Beautiful say about mental health?

Discuss the character arc of William over the course of Hello Beautiful.

Will Sylvie's book be published?

