

## Book Review



### Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano

I read Hello Beautiful for my last book club read and really enjoyed it. It caught my attention from the first line "For the first six days of William Waters life, he was not an only child."

William's childhood is overshadowed by a tragedy and The Padavanos' childhoods are free and easy. At college, William meets the most spirited sister Julia, who shows him what life can really be like. She has a plan for her life: college, a husband, a house and a family of her own. William seems to take the easy option and allows himself to be led into Julia's life plan which isn't necessarily what he wants or needs. He revels in and recoils from the closeness of the Padavano sisters but enjoys a relationship with them all: Sylvie the dreamer, Cecilia the free spirited artist and Emeline who takes care of them all. When the darkness from his past surfaces, William finds comfort in Sylvie, not in Julia, causing a betrayal which tears the sisters apart.

This is a story mainly about families: William's lack of one and the chaos of the close-knit family he marries into,. The author has written this story as an homage to Little Women by Louisa May Alcott and throughout the book there are references to the sisters and their personalities. The flow of the narrative from William and the four sisters gives many insights on the life changing events of all those involved.

This book really drew me in - I constantly told myself while reading 'just one more chapter'. At times, I really disliked some of the characters in the book but the author wrote in such a sensitive way that I had empathy for them. I found the relationships between the sisters fascinating at times - while also feeling frustrated at their inability to put themselves in other's shoes. Julia's selfishness was at times as annoying as was Sylvie's lack of it.

I hope you enjoy this book as much as I have!

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