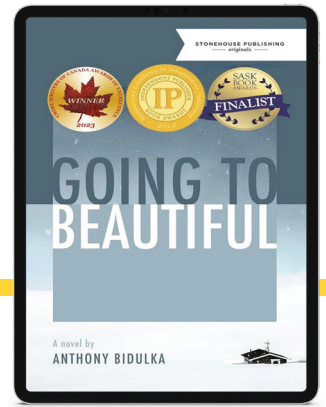


25 November - 9 December

Book club discussion guide

1. Going to Beautiful begins with a joyful occasion followed by great tragedy and grief. How do you feel Jake dealt with Eddie's death? What were his coping mechanisms? Were they successful? What other coping methods are you familiar with which he might have utilized?
2. What roles did best friend and neighbour Baz and son Connor play in Jake's grieving process? Do friends have a different role to play in times of grief as opposed to close family members? Were their responses different and why? How did they each help Jake? Help each other? Help themselves?
3. What role did social media and celebrity culture play in how the tragedy and its aftermath unfolded? Are there pros and cons of each?
4. Jake discovers something about his husband he never knew. Do you think Eddie kept the secret intentionally? If so, why? Have you ever unexpectedly learned the secret of someone close to you? How did it make you feel? What was your response?
5. Why did Jake decide to go to Beautiful? Would you have done the same thing?
6. Jake and Eddie made detailed plans about their funerals. Have you ever done or thought of doing something similar? What plans would you make and who would you share them with?
7. Jake and Baz's initial experiences with Beautiful were not overly positive. Many would have turned tail and returned to the comfort and familiarity of home. They did not. Why? What would you have done?
8. At first glance the quirky residents of Beautiful appear to exist within an impenetrably tight clique of elderly Ukrainians (mostly) with long-held traditions and staunch opinions. Over time they prove themselves to be overwhelmingly openhearted and openminded. Whether it was accepting their version of the ubiquitous Canadian immigrant Chinese café owner as one of their own, hosting a poker rally benefiting a camp for LGBTQ+ youth, or putting up with the greatest oddity of all: big city strangers from Toronto, Beautiful reveals itself to be much more than it first appeared to be. In what ways did Beautiful make Jake and Baz feel welcome? Why did they do this? What was the turning point for both Jake and Baz?
9. Although Beautiful is a fictional town (admittedly based on real people and places I knew growing up), many readers claim it and its residents as a place and people they know. Do you have your own version of Beautiful? Which characters were the most familiar to you? Which characters,



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10. Over the course of the novel, we come to learn about three murders. They occur in different decades, committed by different people, for very different reasons, in very different circumstances. Crime of any kind is a result, not a cause. What caused each of the murders to be committed? Do you believe justice was served, in one way or another, in each case?
11. Food, weather, music, blending of cultures, mysticism, religion and the beauty of nature each play roles within the world of *Going to Beautiful* to convey hope, joy and love. Did any of these resonate more with you than others?
12. *Going to Beautiful* is a book meant to take the reader on a journey from joy to despair and back again. How did the final pages of this book make you feel?