



Benediction

Jim Arnold

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Ben Schmidt is a globe-hopping, gay, San Franciscan, who, despite being a recovering alcoholic heads the marketing department for an up and coming software firm. Add in relationships with sexy artist/neighbor Jake another relationship with the very hot, very Argentinian Eric, mix liberally with the excitement of an upcoming festival tour for the movie that he's directed, and we should have a very happy man. But when an at work rivalry escalates and Jake finds out that he's got prostate cancer his life takes an unplanned detour. Great sex, love, professional and artistic success. What does it all mean when faced with what could well be a terminal illness?

Benediction Details

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Author : Jim Arnold

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From Reader Review Benediction for online ebook

Don says

This book is about a gay man in his 40's that falls apart after receiving a cancer diagnosis. He loses just about everything, his sobriety, sanity, boyfriend and job and perhaps then can find what's really important. This is not a likable character, but he's a real human being and relatable.

Elisa Rolle says

It's really difficult to disconnect the author, Jim Arnold, from his character, Ben Schmidt. They have so many traits in common and Ben comes out so strong from the page of Arnold's novel, that it was really like reading a personal journal more than a fictional novel.

Ben is a wanna-be-director, with actually a first movie going out on Festivals all around the world, a nice work in San Francisco, an handsome boyfriend, Jake, living in the attic of the Victorian house where he has a first floor apartment, and an affair on the side with Eric, and nice guy who is always ready to have sex when Ben wants something different than maybe too perfect Jake. At mid-forty Ben seems to have the perfect dream life for every modern gay man, but he is not happy. He has a constant desire to ruin his own happiness, and his relationship with Jake is a perfect example of that: Ben has the chance to have a perfect life and he is trying to destroy it. If nothing else happened, I think Ben would have never understood that. It was his own right to destroy his life since he has the power to do so.

But then that power is taken off from him. Ben discovers to have prostate cancer. And it's bad. Suddenly his life is crashing around him and he has no power on that. He can't do anything if not wait for the next tragedy to struck. And life is no more good for him. When he is down and without chance to fight back, everything he thought due in his previous life is put at risk: his job, his boyfriend, his passing lovers, even his apartment, with the small threat of mice. When Ben had everything, he didn't know what he really wanted, now that he is on the edge to loose everything, he will have the chance to understand what is really important for him. In a way tragedy helps Ben, freeing him from all the unnecessary things, he will have an enough clear view to see what it really matters.

I didn't expect to enjoy the romance in this book like I did, and truth be told, at first I didn't like so much Ben. But in a way he got better with the story, and I liked that he didn't come out as an hero. There is nothing of heroic in Ben, he is a real man struggling against the world with only the strength of a normal man. And he doesn't cling on his friends, he tries to find the strength inside him. I liked that, amidst all the tragedy, Ben realized that love was the answer, not for the cancer, but at least to give a reason to his life.

Benediction is not an easy book to read, above all if you had an experience with cancer. It's not all roses for Ben, it's not that, since he has cancer, everything else has to go smoothly for him, it's not that people who dislike him suddenly step back. Ben has not only to fight the cancer but also all the other small and big trouble people have in their everyday life. He has to continue to worry for everything he worried before and plus he has the cancer. That is the strength of Ben, being able to face all and take the right decision.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/1439248575/?...>

SheReadsALot says

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JSidelinger says

Ben Schmidt is in his early forties, lives in SF Castro, a creative film director, a professional marketing executive, has a beautiful boyfriend living upstairs in a different apartment (a perfect arrangement in my opinion), and plays from time to time with an attractive Latino until it all falls apart. Ben is diagnosed with prostate cancer and unravels as a result - he's a recovering alcoholic who chooses to relapse and other regrettable choices as well.

The main characters in "Benediction" are fully developed and the narrative clever. I thought the internal process (emotional & mental) regarding the cancer diagnoses extraordinarily layered and complex. The Badlands (a bar & dance venue in San Francisco Castro for the hot younger crowd) demographic and invisible comment by Ben spot on - the need to still be desirable when no longer in that demographic poignantly relatable especially in light of his current situation. Yet there were moments when I had difficulty sympathizing with Ben's plight as a result of his self-destructive behavior and inability to cope - perhaps because the author did such a fine job of creating such a clearly intelligent man - I wanted him to stop wallowing in self-pity and make better choices, which means the author successfully engaged me in becoming invested in Ben's struggles.

Overall, "Benediction" is an absorbing novel that captures one man's journey through a health crisis and emotional minefield. Is he a sympathetic character? No, not always, but that is the real humanity and beauty of Ben's story. I read the book in just a few hours, but there were times when I was slogging my way through it, and felt completely exhausted when I finished - however, it was worth every minute.

Preston says

An interesting book, won in the Goodreads Benediction contest. At first the character was kind of likable with the flaws that make humans human, as the book progressed the story was good, while in other parts the main character was not likable, with taking what he had for granted.

Karen H says

Really interesting book won it at Goodreads giveaways! Is not what I was expecting at all overall it was a good story but not what I look for in books. Now I would recommend it for people that are interested in these type of books I think they would enjoy it!
