



Beautiful Ugly  
by Alice Feeney

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## Discussion Questions

1. What emotional responses did your reading experience elicit? Which scenes, plot points, or revelations affected you most, and why?
2. Who were your favorite and least favorite characters in *Beautiful Ugly*? What made some characters more or less sympathetic to you?
3. How did your experience reading *Beautiful Ugly* compare to your experience reading other Feeney titles—for example *His & Hers* or *Daisy Darker*? What about *Beautiful Ugly* was more or less engaging than Feeney's previous psychological thrillers?
4. Discuss your reactions to the novel's final sequence of plot twists. Which of these narrative revelations was most surprising? Did you anticipate Grady Green's fate at the novel's end? Why or why not?
5. Explore the concept of love as illustrated through Grady and Abby's notions of it. Which idea of love did you find more relatable? Discuss why.
6. Discuss the relationship dynamic between Abby and Grady. Have you been in a relationship that feels entrapping the way Abby felt trapped? Consider the motivations behind and effects of Grady's behavior toward Abby.

## Author Biography

Alice Feeney is the New York Times and Sunday Times multi-million-copy bestselling author of eight novels. Including *Sometimes I Lie*, *His & Hers*, *Rock Paper Scissors*, *Daisy Darker* and *Beautiful Ugly*. Her books have been translated into forty languages, and have been optioned for major screen adaptations, with *His & Hers* coming to Netflix in January 2026 starring Tessa Thompson and Jon Bernthal, and produced by Jessica Chastain's Freckle Films. Alice was a BBC journalist for fifteen years before becoming an author. *My Husband's Wife* is her eighth novel, and will be published around the world in 2026.

## Reviews

Grady Green is having what he dubs as his best worst day ever. Whilst awaiting news of his book potentially making the New York Times bestseller list, his journalist wife, Abby, is late driving home—again, much to his annoyance, always chasing down a case—and stops in the middle of the coastal street when she sees a woman laying in the road. Despite Grady's insistence not to get out, she does. The phone goes quiet, and Grady rapidly travels to the scene just down the coast, but it's too late: Abby's car and all her belongings are there, their fish and chips still on her passenger seat, but Abby is gone. The coastguards find her distinctive red coat down the coast some time later, and Grady never sees his wife again.

It's been a year, and Grady is wrapped in a thick coat of grief. He can't write, seemingly having lost his inspiration in his wife. His agent, Kitty, who is Abby's Godmother, is chasing him for the draft he's been working on—but has yet to write more than a few words—so when Kitty suggests he takes up residence for a few months at an old writer's cabin on a remote Scottish island that she inherited when the old, famous writer died, so that he can really concentrate and immerse himself fully in his book, Grady wavers but takes up the offer, travelling with his dog to Amberly. Yet, soon enough he's doubting he should've come. The town is small, too small, and he is reliant on them for everything, from travelling from place to place to figuring out who's slipping his missing wife's articles under his door, sensing he's wedged between being welcomed and outcast. Then, he thinks he sees Abby. But surely that's a mistake, right? Abby is gone. So why does it feel like Amberly is about to consume him and all the buried secrets and lies he holds whole? And in little glances of Abby's life between the folds of Grady's own, we learn the enigma of who she is and the flip side of Grady's story view, leaving us searching between the lines—and who's telling the truth.

Overall, *Beautiful Ugly* was a chillingly confining thriller with a bolt from the blue at every twisty turn. I found myself utterly torn between our dual narrators, between Grady, this complex writer who felt unpredictably naïve, yet calculated throughout the eyes of himself and his wife, Abby, our other narrator, who tells a different side of a macabre tale that was deeply woven into a marriage built on shaky foundations. Alice's writing is alluring and crisp, and never failed to plant me, as the reader, in the centre of it all. The atmospheric way she manages to transport you there is hair-raisingly spooky at times. And although I found some of the conclusion and reveal to be slightly out-there, it was nevertheless hard to predict just how much this labyrinth of a story could grow darker. I cannot wait to dive into my next read from Alice Feeney if this firecracker of a book is anything to go by. A deliciously dark book all thriller lovers need.

## **Read-Alikes**

### **The Close-up by Pip Drysdale**

When Zoe Ann Weiss moves to Los Angeles to pursue her dream of becoming a writer, her whole future is wide open. But then Zach, the bartender and aspiring actor she's falling for, ghosts her. Her debut novel, a thriller, fails. And she has writer's block worse than ever before. Now, three years later, Zach is famous and Zoe is...not. She's facing her thirtieth birthday, a dead-end job at a flower shop, and a demanding agent, terrified she'll never get her life back on track. But when she goes to make a flower delivery and Zach is at the address, it's like no time has passed at all. They start casually dating in secret, her writer's block disappears, and Zoe begins to wonder: Zach inspired her first novel, so why can't he inspire her second? But then the inevitable happens and photos are leaked, landing Zoe in the press. Her first novel goes viral, and now everyone seems to know her name. Except the problem with everyone knowing your name is that everyone knows your name--including the mysterious stalker obsessed with Zach. A stalker who begins reenacting violent events from Zoe's book, step by step, against her.

### **The Return of Ellie Black by Emiko Jean**

When Ellie Black, who disappeared two years earlier, is found alive in the woods of Washington State, Detective Chelsey Calhoun, whose own sister went missing when they were teenagers, realizes something is not right with Ellie and it's up to her to find the answers before another girl is taken.