

Smile and Look Pretty

A NOVEL

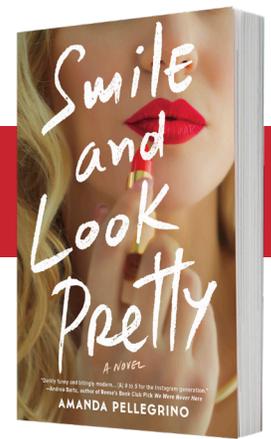


"Darkly funny and biting modern... [A] 9 to 5 for the Instagram generation."
—Andrea Bartz, author of Reese's Book Club Pick *We Were Never Here*

AMANDA PELLEGRINO

Discussion Guide

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- 1) How would you define Lauren's, Cate's, Max's, and Olivia's relationships with each other? And how do those relationships change as the blog grows in popularity? Which character was your favorite and why?
- 2) Cate, Lauren, Olivia, and Max are all dealing with bosses who abuse their power in some way. How have our workplace cultures perpetuated this type of behavior? Do you believe their decision to start *Twentysomething* and write about their bosses was justified? Discuss why or why not.
- 3) The book begins by Cate saying, "The signs were always there," followed by examples of a toxic environment that she'd noticed after three years at Larcey Publishing. Why do you think it took her years to realize these were signs of a harmful workplace? Have you had to deal with a toxic work environment, and if so, what are some other signs that you've experienced?
- 4) Max experiences terrible behavior at the hands of both her male and female bosses, Richard and Sheena. Why do you think Sheena acts the way that she does even if she herself has been through workplace abuse? What reasons might she have had for not coming forward or standing up for other women in the office sooner?
- 5) Cate, Lauren, Olivia, and Max all work in creative industries where the boundaries between work and life are often blurred, all for the sake of their "dream job." What negative and positive roles does ambition play in the novel and in the lives of our characters—both in relation to their jobs, their website, and each other? Would you sacrifice your mental health and well-being for your dream job? Is there a point in these women's relationships with their bosses that would have been your breaking point?
- 6) In the email James writes to Pete after Lauren reports him, he explains his side of the story. What is the problem with he said/she said situations? If you were Pete, who would you believe? What kind of manipulation tactics does James use to get Lauren to do what he wants? How does that manipulation force two very different sides to the story?
- 7) Matt's, Pete's, Nate's, and Richard's behaviors are all somewhere on the toxicity spectrum. How would you rank them, from best to worst? How much awareness do you think they have of their bad behavior?
- 8) Throughout the book, Charlie is constantly taking Max's work and claiming it as his own. What part does Max play in this behavior? And how important are Alyssa's recognition and positive affirmation of Max's work to get Max to finally stand up for herself?
- 9) Discuss the meaning of the title ***Smile and Look Pretty***. Have you ever been told a version of that phrase?
- 10) What will be the thing you remember most from ***Smile and Look Pretty***?

Discussion Guide

DRINKS INSPIRED BY THE BOOK



THE SHIT LIST SPICY MARGARITA

- Salt the rim of your favorite mason jar
- In a shaker (or tupperware with a sturdy lid) add:
 - 1/2 cup Santa Cruz organic limeade
 - 1 lime squeezed
 - 1 squirt of agave
 - 2 shots of tequila
 - 3/4 jalapeno, sliced with seeds
- Add ice
- Shake
- Pour and enjoy



PAINT SWATCH ESPRESSO MARTINI

- In mixing glass or cocktail shaker filled with ice, add:
 - 2 shots of vodka
 - 1 shot of Kahlúa
 - 1 strong espresso
- (If you like yours on the darker side of the paint swatch: more vodka, less Kahlúa)
- Add ice
- Shake
- Pour and enjoy

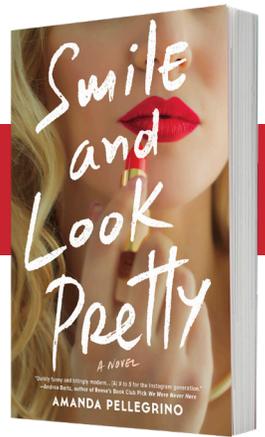


BITCHES GET STUFF DONE DESK WHISKEY

- Grab your favorite office mug
- Steal some ice from the kitchen
- Pour 2 shots of whiskey (perhaps Writers' Tears or Blade and Bow?)
- Enjoy while waiting for your boss to finally go home

Discussion Guide

SMILE AND LOOK PRETTY PLAYLIST



- **“9 to 5”** – Dolly Parton
- **“Good Ol’ Boys Club”** – Kacey Musgraves
- **“America’s Sweetheart”** – Elle King
- **“The Man”** – Taylor Swift
- **“That Bitch”** – Bea Miller
- **“Like a Girl”** – Lizzo
- **“Woman”** – Kesha
- **“Raising Hell”** – Kesha
- **“Castle”** – Halsey
- **“Run the World (Girls)”** – Beyoncé

Discussion Guide

RESOURCES FOR WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

- **MeToo Movement**: an excellent place with resources if you've been harassed, are looking to disclose harassment, or are looking to help those who have
- **RAINN**: has a 24-hour hotline for information and support
- **BetterBrave**: a nonprofit dedicated to tackling sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace by making sure workers understand their rights and are equipped to defend themselves
- **Time's Up**: a treasure trove of resources for someone being harassed or discriminated against at work
- **Time's Up Legal Defense Fund**: connects workers who face sexual harassment with attorneys