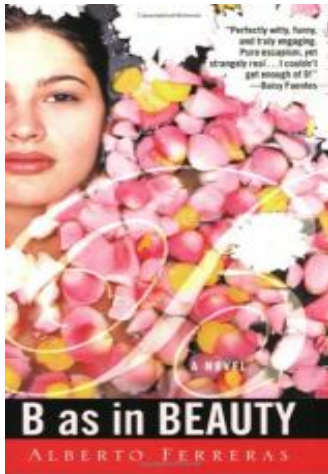


# B as in Beauty

by Alberto Ferreras

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## About the Book

Everyone in the world, it seems, is either prettier or thinner (or both) than Beauty Marie Zavala. And the only thing "B" resents more than her name is the way others judge her for the extra 40 pounds she can't lose. At least she has her career. Or did, until she overhears her boss criticizing her weight and devising a scheme to keep her from being promoted. Enter B's new tax accountant, a modern-day matchmaker determined to boost B's flagging self-esteem by introducing her to rich, successful men who will accept her for who she is. As B's confidence blossoms, so do her fantasies of revenge. But will B find true happiness or true disaster when she unwittingly falls for the one guy she shouldn't?

## Discussion Guide

1. We live in a society that is increasingly obsessed with plastic surgery and the search for the perfect body. Because of this, B is surprised to discover that some men like overweight women exclusively. Do you think these men represent something positive, because they are celebrating women in different forms? Or is this just another way to objectify women? Is exclusively liking overweight women any different from exclusively liking thin women? Is it ever okay to judge someone on physical traits? Have you ever been judged in this way?
2. B talks about how, in ancient Greece, people saw life as a struggle to balance reason and passion. Do you think it is always a good idea to live by such a rule? Give an example from the book in which you think B balanced reason and passion well, and an example of when you think she didn't. Can you think of particular moments in your life when you have allowed either one to take over?
3. When B changes her attitude, she feels that her physique changes as well. Have you ever had that sensation? Can you mention specific moments when being secure and in a positive state of mind made you feel more attractive?
4. Being the daughter of immigrants, B often talks about the life in Cuba that she never lived, and how she feels that both

cultures have shaped her. Are you in touch with your family's roots? Can you identify what impact your roots have had in your life? If not, do you know people who could relate to B's feelings because of their own family background? How do you think they'd react to B's story?

5. When B meets Simon she doesn't find him attractive at all, but little by little, as she gets to know him better, she finds him irresistible. When do you first notice the shift in her feelings for Simon? Do you think if B had met Simon earlier in the story she would have felt the same way about him? Why or why not? Have you ever found yourself in a situation where your feelings for someone changed after you got to know him or her? What do you think makes for a more passionate relationship: one that builds slowly like Simon and B's, or one that starts with love at first sight?

6. B has a hard time relating to the unwritten rules of corporate America. Do you relate to her perception of life in a big company? If you were in her situation, how would you have handled working for a boss like Bonnie?

7. While listening to the song "Pena de los Amores," B decides that she cannot ignore Simon; she needs to see him at least once again, so that no words are left unspoken. Can you relate to this experience? Did you ever walk away from a relationship without getting or giving closure? How did it feel?

8. One of Madame's pieces of advice is, "What other people think of you is none of your business." Do you agree with this idea? What would be the impact of that principle if you applied it to your daily life? Would you be able to ignore other people's opinions of you? Would you be able to keep your opinions to yourself? Is this always a good idea? What are some examples of situations, in the book and in real life, when following Madame's advice would be helpful, or harmful?

## Author Bio

Alberto Ferreras is a New York City based writer, filmmaker and performance artist. He has directed and produced the critically acclaimed "Habla" series for HBO, and his independent film work has been presented all over the world, including the prestigious Berlin Film Festival. As a performance artist he is known for playing "Doctor Truth", a character who makes himself available in public spaces to answer any question with complete honesty.

**B as in Beauty** is his first novel.

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