

The Beauty of Broken Things

by Victoria Connelly



About the Book

United by tragedy, can two broken souls make each other whole?

After the tragic loss of his wife, Helen, Luke Hansard is desperate to keep her memory alive. In an effort to stay close to her, he reaches out to an online friend Helen often mentioned: a reclusive photographer with a curious interest in beautiful but broken objects. But first he must find her --- and she doesn't want to be found.

Orla Kendrick lives alone in the ruins of a remote Suffolk castle, hiding from the haunting past that has left her physically and emotionally scarred. In her fortress, she can keep a safe distance from prying eyes, surrounded by her broken treasures and insulated from the world outside.

When Luke tracks Orla down, he is determined to help her in the way Helen wanted to: by encouraging her out of her isolation and back into the world. But Orla has never seen her refuge as a prison, and when painful secrets and dangerous threats begin to resurface, Luke's good deed is turned on its head.

As they work through their grief for Helen in very different ways, will these two broken souls be able to heal?

Discussion Guide

1. THE BEAUTY OF BROKEN THINGS is set in a small community on the Suffolk coast in England. How important do you think the setting of the novel is? What does it add to the story?

2. The theme of self-isolation is very topical right now. Do you think Orla was right to self-isolate? What effects --- both positive and negative --- do you think this can have on a person?

3. After Luke loses his wife, Helen, he becomes focused on finding Orla. Do you think this was a way for him to avoid his own grief? What do you think of his mission to fulfill Helen's wishes?
4. The novel looks at the role of social media platforms and how we often show one side of ourselves to the world while hiding another. How true to life do you think this is?
5. Why do you think Orla is so attracted to broken things? What role do they play in her life?
6. Helen and Orla's friendship develops over their shared love of photography. What does this tell us about their personalities?
7. The Wild Man of Lorford is based on a real legend in Suffolk, England. How do you think his story ties in with that of Orla's? Can you see any similarities?
8. If you were a villager in Lorford, what would you make of the stranger living alone in the ancient castle? Would you try to befriend her?
9. How important is the role of gardening in the novel? What do you think the allotments and the character of Bill Wilson add to the story?
10. Compare and contrast Orla's relationship with the village of Lorford at the beginning and the end of the novel. How has Orla changed?
11. What do you think will happen next for Orla and Luke?

Author Bio

Victoria Connelly studied English Literature at Worcester University, got married in a medieval castle in the Yorkshire Dales, and now lives in rural Suffolk, England, with her artist husband, a young springer spaniel and a flock of ex-battery hens. With more than a million books sold worldwide, she is the author of two bestselling series, *Austen Addicts* and *The Book Lovers*, as well as many other novels and novellas. Her first published novel, *FLIGHT OF ANGELS*, was made into a film in 2008 by Ziegler Films in Germany. When Victoria isn't at her keyboard writing, she can usually be found in her garden, with a trowel in her hand or a hen on her lap.

Critical Praise

Best-selling British author Connelly's latest captivating book takes readers on an insightful exploration of grief, loss, forgiveness, and the ultimate healing power of love. With its exquisitely nuanced characters and quietly powerful plot, this superbly written love story will definitely please fans of Debbie Macomber and Susan Wiggs, and readers who fondly remember and miss Rosamunde Pilcher.

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