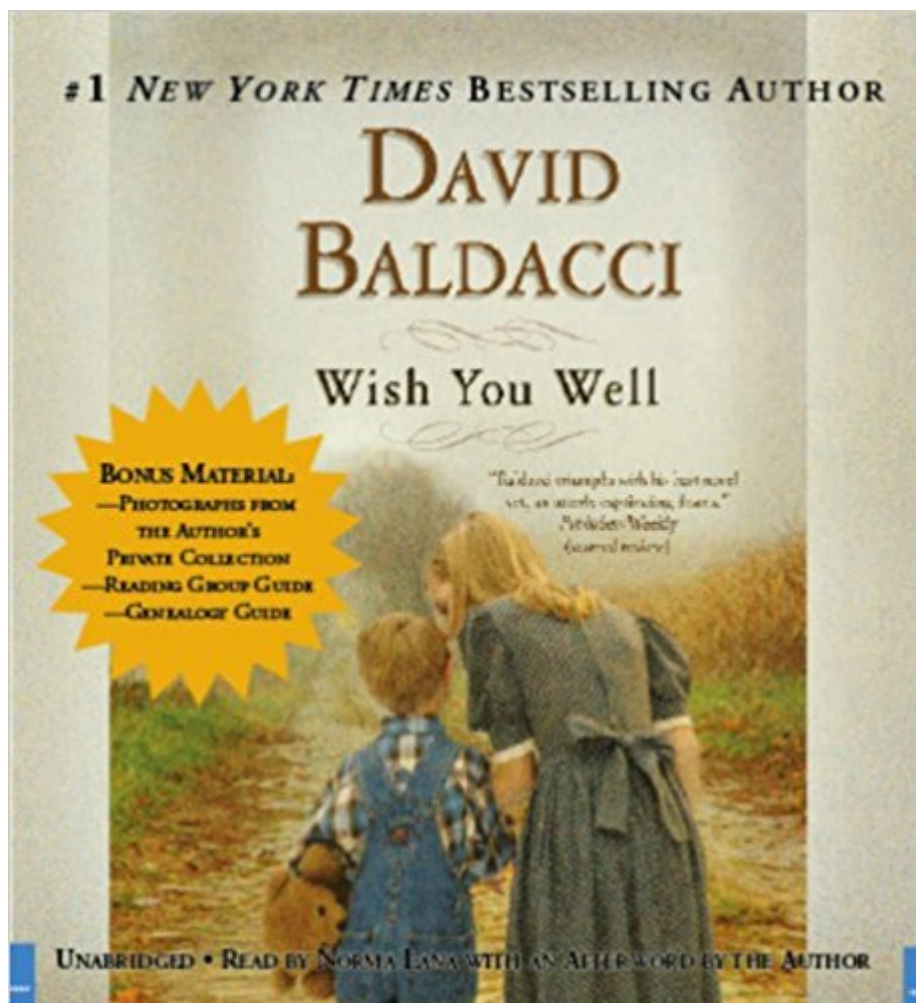


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Wish You Well



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Baldacci has made a name for himself crafting big, burly legal thrillers with larger-than-life plots. However, *Wish You Well*, set in his native Virginia, is a tale of hope and wonder and "something of a miracle" just itching to happen. This shift from contentious urbanites to homespun hill families may come as a surprise to some of Baldacci's fans--but they can rest assured: the author's sense of pacing and exuberant prose have made the leap as well. The year is 1940. After a car accident kills 12-year-old Lou's and 7-year-old Oz's father and leaves their mother Amanda in a catatonic trance, the children find themselves sent from New York City to their great-grandmother Louisa's farm in Virginia. Louisa's hardscrabble existence comes as a profound shock to precocious Lou and her shy brother. Still struggling to absorb their abandonment, they enter gamely into a life that tests them at every turn--and offers unimaginable rewards. For Lou, who dreams of following in her father's literary footsteps, the misty, craggy Appalachians and the equally rugged individuals who make the mountains their home quickly become invested with an almost mythic significance: They took metal cups from nails on the wall and dipped them in the water, and then sat outside and drank. Louisa picked up the green leaves of a mountain spurge growing next to the springhouse, which revealed beautiful purple blossoms completely hidden underneath. "One of God's little secrets," she explained. Lou sat there, cup cradled between her dimpled knees, watching and listening to her great-grandmother in the pleasant shade... Baldacci switches deftly between lovingly detailed character description (an area in which his debt to Laura Ingalls Wilder and Harper Lee seems evident) and patient development of the novel's central plot. If that plot is a trifle

transparent--no one will be surprised by Amanda's miraculous recovery or by the children's eventual battle with the nefarious forces of industry in an attempt to save their great-grandmother's farm--neither reader nor character is the worse for it. After all, nostalgia is about remembering things one already knows. --Kelly Flynn --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Baldacci is writing what? That waspish question buzzed around publishing circles when Warner announced that the bestselling author of *The Simple Truth*, *Absolute Power* and other turbo-thrillers -- an author generally esteemed more for his plots than for his characters or prose -- was trying his hand at mainstream fiction, with a mid-century period novel set in the rural South, no less. *Shades* of John Grisham and *A Painted House*. But guess what? Clearly inspired by his subject -- his maternal ancestors, he reveals in a foreword, hail from the mountain area he writes about here with such strength -- Baldacci triumphs with his best novel yet, an utterly captivating drama centered on the difficult adjustment to rural life faced by two children when their New York City existence shatters in an auto accident. That tragedy, which opens the book with a flourish, sees acclaimed but impecunious writer Jack Cardinal dead, his wife in a coma and their daughter, Lou, 12, and son, Oz, seven, forced to move to the southwestern Virginia farm of their aged great-grandmother, Louisa. Several questions propel the subsequent story with vigor. Will the siblings learn to accept, even to love, their new life? Will their mother regain consciousness? And -- in a development that takes the narrative into familiar Baldacci territory for a gripping legal showdown -- will Louisa lose her land to industrial interests? Baldacci exults in high melodrama here, and it doesn't always work: the death of one major character will wring tears from the stoniest eyes, but the reappearance of another, though equally hanky-friendly, is outright manipulative. Even so, what the novel offers above all is bone-deep emotional truth, as its myriad characters -- each, except for one cartoonish villain, as real as readers' own kin -- grapple not just with issues of life and death but with the sufferings and joys of daily existence in a setting detailed with finely attuned attention and a warm sense of wonder. This novel has a huge heart -- and millions of readers are going to love it. Agent, Aaron Priest. 600,000 first printing; 3-city author tour; simultaneous Time Warner Audiobook; foreign rights sold in the U.K., Bulgaria, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Turkey; world Spanish rights sold. (One-day laydown, Oct. 24) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

One of THE best books I've read in a long time! I LOVED it. Beautifully written, almost poetic at

times, and with just the right balance of intrigue--and even suspense. I so enjoy the captivating stories of man's challenges to overcome, get along with--and sometimes surrender to--nature. For reasons long-treasured by generations, this is a heartfelt story of every emotion imaginable. If someone doesn't put this on the big screen, they are missing out on a bunch of Oscars! Well, one for sure: Best picture. Don't miss reading this spellbinding adventure and journey of the heart. I think I'll buy the hardcopy to hold (something about holding a book you love) and read it again, which is really telling for me because I don't recall ever rereading a book.

No blood this time. But lots of the kind of death that life hands out to all of us. Characters that you will love, and wish they were your next door neighbors. The children are the stars, but they are the kind of kids that you and I were when we were very young and the world was really big and scary, and it didn't really care if we were scared. The miraculous recovery at the end was fully expected, but that's how even the bloody, gruesome novels by Baldacci turn out, so why not this one, too? Much, much better than Grisham's "The Painted House" (to which one or more of the critics compared it) which I found dreary. Congratulations, Mr. Baldacci! (P.S., when can we expect another Camel Club adventure, please?)

I'm a Baldacci true blue fan. I own most of his books in print and then buy the Kindle version so I can read them again on my device when I am waiting for someone or something. This story of the strength and perseverance of the mountain people of Kentucky as seen through the eyes of an eloquent yet stubborn 13-year old girl, her 8-year-old brother, and their grandmother and her devoted friends made me realize that people aren't that different; only their attitude makes them proud or humble, wise or ignorant, kind or cruel, but it is their love of God and His creations that set them apart from one another. This one will stay in my heart and memory a long time, David!

Great book. This is a story about family, about friendship, and about life in a community where everybody knows everybody else. I've read some 'thrillers' by Davis Baldacci that I really liked. I wondered how he would do with a more sensitive story about family and caring for others. Sure enough, he made me really care about these people and the mountain farm they owned. Totally enjoyed this book.

This was such a different book for Baldacci..but I really enjoyed it...As I am quite advanced in years and it took me back to when I was growing up and my Grandparents. I did not have the mountains

as I was a Flatlander but the stories are a lot the same. I did write a short story about my family for the younger ones to have as they will not remember some of the things that happened when the Grandparents were here and told all the stories that I remember. It was a labor of love for me...all 100 pages...and the family were all excited to get it. Everyone should do this because the day will come that no one will even care about their past I am afraid.

Baldacci has written more than a dozen best sellers. He ranks with Grisham for me as America's best mystery writer. This ranks among his very best. This recollection of his mother's grandmother is the best book I read this year. An oral historian myself, I have been motivated to write mother's story as well as my own. This book would be ideal for study groups, especially if they are the least interested in oral history. This particular edition does not include the discussion guide and oral history directions in the original paperback available at Barnes and Noble. I am giving the book to all my dearest friends for Christmas. I am happy to see there is a school edition. I would have used this when teaching my students to collect and write their oral histories.

I wasn't very taken with this book. The ending, in particular, was a little too "written for movies" for me. Too many coincidences, all coming happily together in the end. Kind of schmaltzy.

I loved this book and sorry I missed the movie as it is a very poignant and uplifting story of a strong family and the strife and trials of the two young siblings who survived an automobile accident that killed their father and put their mother into a long term coma. Being transplanted from New York City to a rustic farm in rural Virginia to live with their great grandmother does nothing to diminish the spirit of 12-year old Lou and her 7 year old brother. There are many wonderful characters in this book and Baldacci brings them all to life.

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