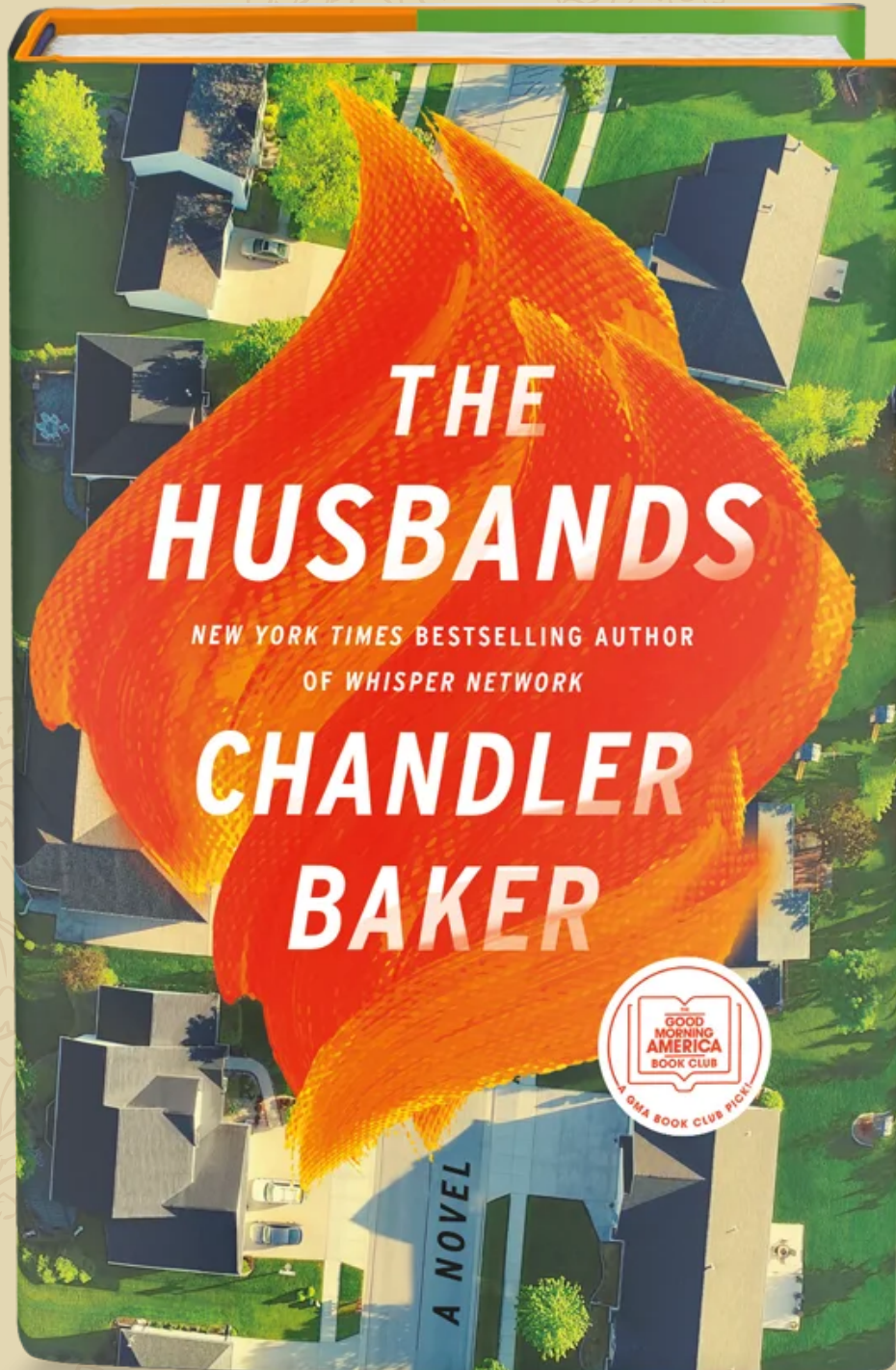


The Husbands
BOOK CLUB KIT



Introduction

Dear Reader,

Welcome to The Husbands Book Club Kit! When I started writing this book, I was pregnant with my second child, staring down the barrel of the recalibration of domestic responsibilities that comes with a new baby.

The book felt personal, as many things that take place in the privacy of our own homes do. But if anything, living through the pandemic has exposed the real impact of depending on women to carry the burden of the “second shift” disproportionately. The problem of dividing domestic labor isn’t just personal, it’s widespread and systemic and it’s caused more than 2.5 million women to leave the workforce in the last twelve months alone, at four times the rate of men.

In *The Husbands* I hope you’ll find a big, juicy murder mystery with something to say and I’m so pleased it's your book club pick.

Best,
Chandler Baker

Summary

THE HUSBANDS asks: to what lengths will a woman go for a little more help from her husband?

Nora Spangler is a successful attorney but when it comes to domestic life, she packs the lunches, schedules the doctor appointments, knows where the extra paper towel rolls are, and designs and orders the holiday cards. Her husband works hard, too... but why does it seem like she is always working so much harder?

When the Spanglers go house hunting in Dynasty Ranch, an exclusive suburban neighborhood, Nora meets a group of high-powered women--a tech CEO, a neurosurgeon, an award-winning therapist, a bestselling author--with enviably supportive husbands. When she agrees to help with a resident's wrongful death case, she is pulled into the lives of the women there. She finds the air is different in Dynasty Ranch. The women aren't hanging on by a thread.

But as the case unravels, Nora uncovers a plot that may explain the secret to having-it-all. One that's worth killing for. Calling to mind a Stepford Wives gender-swap, The Husbands imagines a world where the burden of the "second shift" is equally shared --and what it may take to get there.



Dynasty Ranch

BLOOD ORANGE COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

1.5 ounces vodka

3 ounces grapefruit juice
(freshly squeezed)

3 ounces blood orange juice
(freshly squeezed)

0.5 ounces lemon juice
(freshly squeezed)

PREPARATION

Pour all ingredients into an ice-filled cocktail shaker. Shake well and pour into an ice-filled glass.

Garnish cocktail glass with a blood orange wedge.

Enjoy!

Menu

FIRE ROASTED TOMATO CAPRESE

2 pints fire roasted cherry tomatoes
4 sprigs thyme
4 garlic cloves, smashed
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
8 ounces fresh buffalo or cow mozzarella (about 1 ball),
room temperature, torn into large pieces
Flaky sea salt
Country-style bread, brushed with oil, toasted in oven
(for serving)

PREPARATION

Step 1

Preheat oven to 350°. Toss tomatoes, thyme, garlic, and oil on a rimmed baking sheet to coat and season lightly with kosher salt. Spread out in a single layer and roast until tomatoes are bursting and lightly browned, 40-45 minutes; let cool.

Step 2

Arrange mozzarella on a platter and spoon warm tomato mixture with juices over; sprinkle with sea salt. Serve with olive-oil-toasted bread for soaking up all those extra juices.

Step 3

Do Ahead: Tomatoes can be roasted 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Gently reheat before using.

Discussion Questions

1. In your ideal world, what is one thing you wish a partner would do to help without being asked?
2. At what point in the story did you start to believe something was off about the residents of Dynasty Ranch, and what does that reveal to you about your own sense of social norms?
3. The book spends a significant amount of time exploring the plight of the working mother through the eyes of Nora, but how does the undue burden of domestic and emotional labor negatively impact not just mothers but all women?
4. Can a husband know what a 50/50 split of domestic labor looks like when they've never shouldered all of it before?
5. Comparisons are often drawn between *The Husbands* and *The Stepford Wives*. What is the difference between the Stepford wives and the husbands in this novel?
6. Cornelia seems to live by a code of teleological ethics, believing that if the goal is morally important enough, any method of achieving it is acceptable. Up to what point were you willing to buy into Cornelia's logic? Is there a moment when you think Cornelia broke with her own moral code?
7. Penny specializes in giving warm, thoughtful advice. What is the kindest piece of advice you could offer to yourself during this period of your life?
8. Do you feel sorry for the men of Dynasty Ranch? Why or why not?
9. What do you make of Nora's decision in the last line of the book? Were you surprised? Did you find this final choice in or out of character for her? How so? Is she justified?
10. Let's say tomorrow you are given the keys to a new house in Dynasty Ranch complete with all the amenities. How does your life change?



The Husbands Inspired Quiz



WHICH PAY GAP IS WIDER-- THE GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN, OR BETWEEN MOTHERS AND NON MOTHERS?

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ON AVERAGE, WHAT DO AMERICAN MOTHERS RATE THEIR LEVEL OF STRESS ON A SCALE OF 1-10?

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WHAT PERCENTAGE OF WORKING MOTHERS REPORT SHOULDERING THE MAJORITY OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES?

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HOW MANY AMERICAN WOMEN ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE LEFT THE WORKFORCE SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN?

.....

ARE WORKING MOTHERS LESS LIKELY TO BE THE FAMILY BREADWINNER THAN THEIR HUSBANDS?

.....

TRUE OR FALSE: MEN HOLD 62% OF MANAGER POSITIONS TO WOMEN'S 38%.

.....

ARE WOMEN MORE OR LESS LIKELY TO BECOME MOTHERS NOW AS COMPARED TO A DECADE AGO?

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Quiz Answers:

1. Mothers and Non Mothers
2. 8.5 out of 10, according to a survey of 7,000 mothers
3. 86% of working mothers, according to a survey conducted by Bright Horizons—an on-site corporate childcare provider
4. Nearly 3 million women
5. As of 2016, most mothers were either breadwinners earning the majority of their family's income or co-breadwinners earning less than half but at least one-quarter of their families' income
6. True
7. According to Pew Research, women are more likely now to become mothers than they were a decade ago, and this is particularly the case among highly educated women