

*Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:*

## Husbands & Lovers by Beatriz Williams

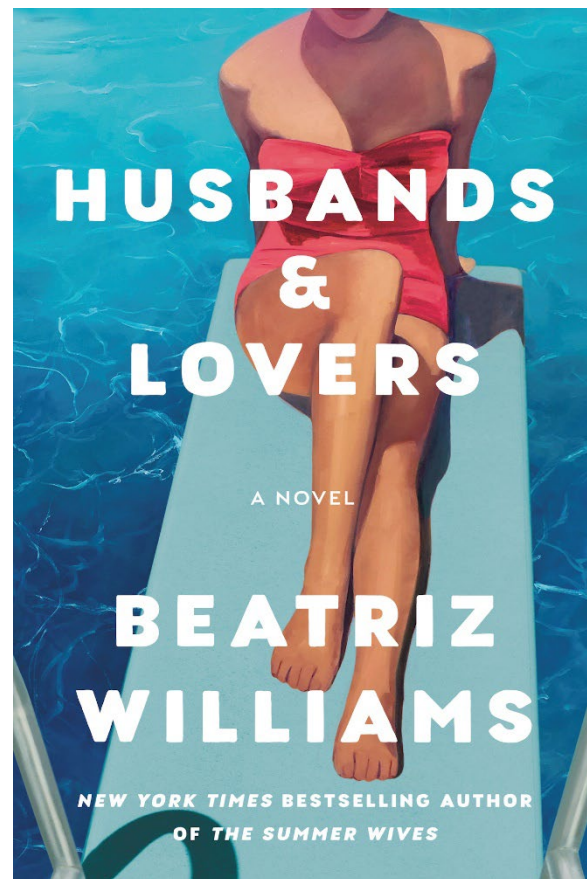
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### Book summary

Two women—separated by decades and continents, and united by a mysterious family heirloom—discover second chances at love in this sweeping novel from the New York Times bestselling author of *The Summer Wives*.

*New England, 2022.* Three years ago, single mother Mallory Dunne received the telephone call every parent dreads—her ten-year-old son Sam had been airlifted from summer camp with acute poisoning from a toxic death cap mushroom, leaving him fighting for his life. Now, in a search for the donor kidney that will give her son a chance for a normal life, Mallory's forced to confront two harrowing secrets from her past: her mother's



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adoption from an infamous Irish orphanage in 1952, and her own all-consuming summer romance fourteen years earlier with her childhood best friend Monk Adams—now one of the world’s most beloved singer-songwriters—a fairytale cut short by an agonizing betrayal.

*Cairo, 1951.* After suffering tragedy beyond comprehension in the war, Hungarian refugee Hannah Ainsworth has forged a respectable new life for herself—marriage to a wealthy British diplomat, a coveted posting in glamorous Cairo. But a fateful encounter with the enigmatic manager of a hotel bristling with spies leads to a passionate affair that will reawaken Hannah’s longing for everything she once lost. As revolution simmers in the Egyptian streets, a pregnant Hannah finds herself snared into a game of intrigue between two men...and an act of sacrifice that will echo down the generations.

Timeless and bittersweet, *Husbands and Lovers* draws readers on an unforgettable journey of heartbreak and redemption, from the revolutionary fires of midcentury Egypt to the moneyed beaches of contemporary New England. Beatriz Williams has written a poignant and beautifully voiced novel of deeply human characters entangled by morally complex issues—of privilege, class, and the female experience—inside worlds brought shimmeringly to life.

Source: <https://beatrizwilliams.com/books/husbands-and-lovers/>



# *Husbands & Lovers* by Beatriz Williams

## Meet the Author

Beatriz Williams is the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and internationally bestselling author of *Our Woman in Moscow*, *The Summer Wives*, *Her Last Flight*, *The Golden Hour*, *The Secret Life of Violet Grant*, *A Hundred Summers*, and several other works of historical fiction, including four novels in collaboration with fellow bestselling authors Karen White and Lauren Willig. A graduate of Stanford University with an MBA in Finance from Columbia



University, Beatriz worked as a communications and corporate strategy consultant in New York and London before her first novel was published in 2012. Beatriz's books have won numerous awards, have been translated into more than a dozen languages, and appear regularly in bestseller lists around the world.

Born in Seattle, Washington, Beatriz now lives near the Connecticut shore with her husband and four children, where she divides her time between writing and laundry.

Source: <https://beatrizwilliams.com/about/>



# *Husbands & Lovers* by Beatriz Williams

## Author's Letter to Readers

Dear Reader,

A few years ago, I came across a newspaper article about how the rise in DNA ancestry research has exposed a galaxy of family secrets, from adoptions to affairs to hidden ethnicities. One subject had traced her mother's descent through one of the notorious Irish orphanages back to an extramarital liaison with a hotel manager in a former colony of the British Empire . . . and right away my imagination started filling in the vast empty spaces of a story that seemed almost limitless in its potential for human and historical drama.

If you've read any of my books, you know I'm obsessed with the way our past communicates with our present. Whether it's the butterfly wings of history, the experiences of our grandparents, or the choices we make in our earlier years, everything that goes before becomes part of who we are today. Single mother Mallory Dunne, the main character of *Husbands & Lovers*, uncovers more than she ever imagined when she explores her own mother's history in order to find a potential kidney donor for her son, Sam. And she's also forced to confront her own past, in the form of Sam's father—her childhood friend and onetime sweetheart, the irrepressibly charismatic Monk Adams—who's now one of the world's most beloved singer-songwriters (and possibly the most appealing leading man I've ever created!).

Thank you so much for choosing to spend your summer with *Husbands & Lovers*. I hope you enjoy these characters and that their rich histories linger in your heart as they have in mine.

Happy reading!

BEATRIZ

Source: [https://www.randomhousebooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Husbands-And-Lovers\\_Book-Club-Kit.pdf](https://www.randomhousebooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Husbands-And-Lovers_Book-Club-Kit.pdf)





# *Husbands & Lovers* by Beatriz Williams

## Discussion Questions

1. Mallory and Hannah both face dire circumstances and hard choices that require them to decide whether to follow their heart. What do you think Beatriz Williams is saying about the female experience with these two characters?
2. *Husbands & Lovers* is written from two points of view in different times and settings. Which POV resonated the most with you? How did the structure of the novel open up your understanding of the larger story?
3. In chapter six Monk says, “You realize that once you choose one path, you can’t go back. You think about all the paths you could have taken and didn’t.” Do you agree with his statement? Are there paths that you wish you’d taken in your life?
4. Motherhood is a central theme in each storyline. Discuss how both Mallory and Hannah shape their lives and their decisions based on their children. What other themes did you like in the book?
5. Were you aware of the revolutionary fires in Cairo in 1952 before reading this novel? Did you learn anything new?
6. Class and privilege play pivotal roles in the narrative. Discuss how the characters in both storylines are impacted by their place in society.
7. Mallory gets a second chance with her first love. Do you think love can be rekindled? Are some things fated to be?
8. What did you make of the ending? Did you guess how the storylines would intersect before you finished the novel?
9. Winthrop Island is featured in several of Beatriz Williams other novels. Did you notice any character cameos from her previous books?
10. Do you have any family heirlooms? Why do you think we often ascribe so much emotional value to objects?
11. Who would you cast in the film adaptation of *Husbands & Lovers*?

Source: [https://www.randomhousebooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Husbands-And-Lovers\\_Book-Club-Kit.pdf](https://www.randomhousebooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Husbands-And-Lovers_Book-Club-Kit.pdf)

## Recipes

### Ina Garten's Coq Au Vin

#### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons good olive oil
- 4 ounces good bacon or pancetta, diced
- 1 (3 to 4-pound) chicken, cut in 8ths
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 pound carrots, cut diagonally in 1-inch pieces
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
- 1/4 cup Cognac or good brandy
- 1/2 bottle (375 ml) good dry red wine such as Burgundy
- 1 cup good chicken stock, preferably homemade
- 10 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature, divided
- 1 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 pound frozen small whole onions
- 1/2 pound cremini mushrooms, stems removed and thickly sliced



#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees F.

Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven. Add the bacon and cook over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove the bacon to a plate with a slotted spoon.



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Meanwhile, lay the chicken out on paper towels and pat dry. Liberally sprinkle the chicken on both sides with salt and pepper. When the bacon is removed, brown the chicken pieces in batches in a single layer for about 5 minutes, turning to brown evenly. Remove the chicken to the plate with the bacon and continue to brown until all the chicken is done. Set aside.

Add the carrots, onions, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper to the pan and cook over medium heat for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are lightly browned. Add the garlic and cook for 1 more minute. Add the Cognac and put the bacon, chicken, and any juices that collected on the plate into the pot. Add the wine, chicken stock, and thyme and bring to a simmer. Cover the pot with a tight-fitting lid and place in the oven for 30 to 40 minutes, until the chicken is just not pink. Remove from the oven and place on top of the stove.

Mash 1 tablespoon of butter and the flour together and stir into the stew. Add the frozen onions. In a medium sauté pan, add the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter and cook the mushrooms over medium-low heat for 5 to 10 minutes, until browned. Add to the stew. Bring the stew to a simmer and cook for another 10 minutes. Season to taste. Serve hot.

Source: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/coq-au-vin-recipe4-2011654>



# *Husbands & Lovers* by Beatriz Williams

Virgin Cosmopolitan

Ingredients:

- 2 ounces unsweetened cranberry juice
- ½ ounce zero calorie simple syrup omit if using sweetened cranberry juice, or to taste, or may use a sugared simple syrup
- 1 ounce orange juice
- 1 dash orange bitters about 8 drops, or 1/8 teaspoon orange extract, optional
- ½ ounce lime juice or lemon juice ice
- 3 ounces sparkling water or club soda or tonic



Instructions

Place ingredients except sparkling water in a shaker. Shake, pour into a martini glass, then top with club soda or fizzy water.

Source: <https://artofnaturalliving.com/virgin-cosmopolitan/#recipe>

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