

A woman with dark hair is sitting on a light blue lounge chair in a swimming pool. She is wearing a bright red, strapless, form-fitting swimsuit. The water is a vibrant blue with visible ripples. The overall scene is bright and summery.

HUSBANDS

&

LOVERS

BEATRIZ

WILLIAMS

BOOK CLUB KIT

AUTHOR LETTER

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

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*?

MONK ADAM'S PLAYLIST

PLAYLIST AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Bob Dylan

EARLY MORNING RAIN

Gordon Lightfoot

BIG YELLOW TAXI

Joni Mitchell

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Simon and Garfunkel

ROAD

Nick Drake

OUR HOUSE

Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

LEAVING ON A JET PLANE

John Denver

HEART OF GOLD

Neil Young

COSMOPOLITAN

FROM THE MOHEGAN INN BAR ON WINTHROP ISLAND

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz. vodka
- 1 oz. cranberry juice cocktail
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. fresh lime juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. triple sec
- Orange twist (for serving)

PREPERATION:

- **STEP 1:** Combine 2 oz. vodka, 1 oz. cranberry juice cocktail, $\frac{3}{4}$ oz fresh lime juice, and $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. triple sec in a cocktail shaker. Fill shaker with ice, cover, and shake vigorously until outside of shaker is very cold, about 20 seconds.
- **STEP 2:** Strain cocktail through a Hawthorne strainer or a slotted spoon into a martini glass. Garnish with orange twist.



GIN AND TONIC

FROM THE SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL IN CAIRO

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ounces gin (preferably Tanqueray)
- 1-3 lime wedges
- 3-4 ounces tonic water

PREPERATION:

- Add gin to a highball glass filled with ice
- Squeeze in lime wedges to taste, then add them to glass. Add tonic water; stir to combine.

