



The Stepford Wives

By Ira Levin
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Introduction

For Joanna Eberhart, her husband, Walter, and their children, the move to the beautiful suburb of Stepford seems almost too good to be true. It is. For behind the town's idyllic façade lies a terrible secret == a secret so shattering that no one who encounters it will ever be the same.

At once a masterpiece of psychological suspense and a savage commentary on a media-driven society that values the pursuit of youth and beauty at all costs, *The Stepford Wives* is a novel so frightening in its final implications that the title itself has earned a place in the American lexicon.

Questions for Discussion

1. How would you describe Joanna Eberhart's initial impressions of the town of Stepford, and how do those impressions change over the course of the novel?
2. What role does the Men's Association play in Stepford, and why does Joanna suspect that the organization is responsible for the dramatic changes in her female friends and acquaintances?
3. How would you define a "Stepford Wife"?
4. What do the shared characteristics of Stepford wives reveal about their husbands' desires?
5. How are themes like feminism, suburban conformity, and marriage satirized in *The Stepford Wives*?
6. How would you characterize Walter Eberhart's involvement in what's happening to the women of Stepford? Does he seem entirely complicit or entirely innocent?
7. Ira Levin, the author of *The Stepford Wives*, leaves the dramatic scene between Bobbie and Joanna in which the truth of Bobbie's humanity is revealed, unresolved. Why do you think he chose to leave this scene open-ended, and how did you interpret their exchange?
8. To what extent was Joanna's transformation from skeptic to Stepford Wife inevitable? Were you surprised by the conclusion of the novel?

About the Author

Ira Levin is the highly acclaimed and internationally bestselling author of *Rosemary's Baby*, *A Kiss Before Dying*, *The Boys from Brazil*, *This Perfect Day*, *Sliver*, *Son of Rosemary*, and *The Stepford Wives*. He also wrote *Deathtrap*, the longest-running thriller in Broadway history. He is a two-time winner of the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Allan Poe Award.