

# The Stepford Wives

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The internationally bestselling novel by the author of *A Kiss Before Dying*, *The Boys from Brazil*, and *Rosemary's Baby*

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With an Introduction by Peter Straub

For Joanna, her husband, Walter, and their children, the move to beautiful Stepford seems almost too good to be true. It is. For behind the town's idyllic facade 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.

Novelist and playwright Ira Levin (1929-2007) was a native New Yorker whose books include *A Kiss Before Dying*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *This Perfect Day*, *The Stepford Wives*, *The Boys from Brazil*, *Sliver*, and *Son of Rosemary*. His plays include *No Time for Sergeants*, *Critic's Choice*, and the longest-running thriller in Broadway history, *Deathtrap*. An alumnus of New York University, Levin also wrote the lyrics of the Barbra Streisand classic "He Touched Me," and was the recipient of three Edgar Allan Poe Awards from the Mystery Writers of America (including 2003's 'Grand Master'), as well as the Horror Writers Association's Bram Stoker Award for lifetime achievement.

Levin was a hot commodity in the 1960s and 1970s, cranking out horror potboilers like *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Boys from Brazil*, and this 1972 title, all of which share the common theme that people aren't always who or what they seem. This slim volume finds protagonist Joanna and husband Walter and kids leaving the wicked city for the bucolic town of Stepford. Despite its ideal facade, the sleepy little storybook town actually is more wicked. Joanna soon notices that her female neighbors are all body and no brains and seemingly exist only to do housework while their husbands gather nightly at a mysterious men's club. Even worse, it appears that the women who moved there just before her suddenly begin morphing into hausfraus built like swimsuit models--and she's next! It's hard to tell if this is a stab at the feminist movement or simply a male fantasy, but it's a fun read and will keep you turning the pages. Note also that a new feature film based on this story is in the works.

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Other Books

The Celebration Chronicles. Scholar and iconoclast Andrew Ross spent a year living in the much scrutinized, and often demonized, Celebration--the picture-perfect town that Disney is building for 20,000 people in the swamp and scrub of central Florida. Lavishly planned with a downtown center and newly minted antique homes, and front-loaded with an ultraprogressive school, hospital, and high-tech infrastructure, Celebration was to offer a fresh start in a world gone wrong. Yet behind the picket fences, gleaming facades, and

"Kodak moment" streetscapes. Ross discovered a real place with real problems, and not a theme park village cooked up by the Imagineers. Compelling and wide-ranging in its analysis, *The Celebration Chronicles* provides a startlingly fresh perspective on the link between contemporary urban planning and corporate bottom lines.

For accounts of racial exclusion in postwar suburbanization, see Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 190-230; and Abrams, *Forbidden Neighbors*.