SARAH PEKKANEN is the internationally and USA Today bestselling author of eight previous solo novels and the coauthor of the New York Times bestseller The Wife Between Us. A former investigative journalist and award-winning feature writer, she has published work in The Washington Post, USA Today, and many others. She is the mother of three sons and lives just outside Washington, D.C.

GREER HENDRICKS is the coauthor of the New York Times bestseller The Wife Between Us. Prior to becoming a novelist, she spent over two decades as an editor at Simon & Schuster. She obtained her master’s degree in journalism from Columbia University, and her writing has appeared in The New York Times, Allure, and Publishers Weekly. She lives in Manhattan with her husband and two children.
A CONVERSATION WITH GREER HENDRICKS AND SARAH PEKKANEN

Could you tell us a little bit about your backgrounds and why you decided to work together on a novel?

Sarah: After working together on several novels as an author-editor team, Greer and I knew we had a unique relationship. Not only do we share strikingly similar narrative instincts and approaches to storytelling, but we also have developed a strong friendship through the years.

Greer: When I left Simon & Schuster, I had some editorial and consulting projects lined up, but I also knew, in the back of my mind, that I wanted to write fiction. I didn’t reveal this secret to many people, but I did tell Sarah. When she approached me about writing together, I initially worried it would be copious out to work with someone else, that it would be less of an accomplishment. Then I realized it would be crazy to turn down this opportunity. While I had published a few personal essays and edited hundreds of books, I knew I had a lot to learn about writing as an actual novelist. Plus, I adored Sarah and the collaboration sounded a lot more fun than working alone.

Sarah: I’ve written everything from investigative newspaper series to magazine features to short stories to seven novels. Challenging myself and growing creatively has always been vitally important to me. But it was a purely instinctual decision to ask Greer if she wanted to write together; some inner voice told me it was important to me. But it was a purely instinctual decision to ask Greer if she wanted to write together; some inner voice told me it was important to me. But it was a purely instinctual decision to ask Greer if she wanted to write together; some inner voice told me it was important to me. But it was a purely instinctual decision to ask Greer if she wanted to write together; some inner voice told me it was important to me. But it was a purely instinctual decision to ask Greer if she wanted to write together; some inner voice told me it was important to me. But it was a purely instinctual decision to ask Greer if she wanted to write together; some inner voice told me it was important to me.

What inspired you to write a dark, twisty thriller like The Wife Between Us?

Greer: If I wanted to write a dark, twisty thriller like The Wife Between Us, we wanted to explore how memories are colored by the lenses through which we view our world, and how people can share an experience but carry away markedly different perspectives and emotions.

Sarah: Little did we know that it would take every ounce of our collective brainpower to keep track of the literary kaleidoscope we wanted to create!

What is the best part of working together? Any bad parts?

Greer: The best part is each other.

Sarah: The worst part is technology glitches.

What’s next for you—are you currently working on another book together? If so, can you share any details of what it’s about?

Sarah: We’ve finished our next book, titled An Anonymous Girl. It’s another psychological thriller with strong female protagonists.

Greer: We can’t reveal much more about it, partly because, like The Wife Between Us, it’s filled with unexpected twists and turns.

QUIZ: WHICH AUTHOR IS WHICH?

1. Which author travels in heels and which one wears sneakers?
2. Which author relaxes by listening to podcasts and which one runs on a treadmill?
3. Which author buys a new book, and which one buys a secondhand book?
4. Whose exercise goals include climbing more mountains and who runs marathons?
5. On page 162, Vanessa says, “I guess I thought marrying Richard was a good idea.” Do you think that is one’s past can explain or excuse their behavior. What’s your opinion? Did getting to know more about Vanessa’s or Richard’s experience if you reread the novel?
6. The Wife Between Us asks difficult questions about how much someone’s past can explain or excuse their behavior. What’s your opinion? Did getting to know more about Vanessa’s or Richard’s experience if you reread the novel?

Answers to Quiz:
1. Sarah: heels/Greer: sneakers
2. Sarah: podcasts/Sarah: reading screenings
3. Greer: leftover food/Sarah: bare feet
4. Sarah: mountains/Greer: four-mile runs
5. Sarah: vegetarian/Greer: steak

RECOMMENDED READING
Before I Go to Sleep
J.S. Watson

The Story: Every night when a woman goes to sleep, her memory is erased. When she wakes up, the man beside her—the same man who has shared her bed for years—is a stranger.

Why Read It?: This riveting concept opened up hours of discussion for us, and helped spark our interest in exploring the slippery and subjective nature of memory as a theme in our novel. Even if we think we are in full command of our remembrances, how accurate can they truly be?

Fates and Furies
Lauren Groff

The Story: The idea that there are two sides to every story is not a new one, but in Lauren Groff’s Absent Wife and Furies, a complicated marriage is explored in a wholly original way: part Greek fable, part literary suspense.

Why Read It?: The dual perspectives in this novel was one of the major attractions behind The Wife Between Us. Filled with twists, galore, Fates and Furies also features a favorite plot of ours: a dysfunctional relationship with a vengeful wife.

The Good Marriage
Stephen King

The Story: This novella appears in Stephen King’s Full Dark, No Stars. It begins on an ordinary night, when a wife goes out to the garage and discovers a box of horrors tucked beneath her husband’s workbench. He is away on a business trip, but he may be coming home on the short span of time that follows, she must wrestle with competing urges: uncover the truth about the man she married a quarter-century ago, or continue living in blissful ignorance?

Why Read It?: This is the same question our narrator grapples with during her marriage, until she can no longer ignore an inner voice crying out a warning.

Rebecca
Daphne du Maurier

The Story: We are often drawn to books that feature unassuming heroines whose lives are intrinsically altered when they fall for controlling older men. In the case of Daphne du Maurier’s Rebecca, the unnamed young protagonist meets Maxim de Winter, a handsome and wealthy widower. When the second Mrs. de Winter finds herself increasingly haunted by the shadow of her mysterious predecessor, she becomes determined to uncover the dark secrets that threaten her happiness.

Why Read It?: It wasn’t until months after we’d completed The Wife Between Us, in which a first wife is obsessed with her replacement, that we realized the parallels to Rebecca, in which the dynamic is flipped and a replacement is consumed by thoughts of the first wife.

What Alice Forgot
Liane Moriarty

The Story: Few writers are able to combine page-turning suspense with truly relatable characters, but Liane Moriarty manages to do this in book after book. What Alice Forgot is one of her earlier novels, and the premise is that a head injury forces the protagonist, Alice, to forget the past ten years. Why Read It?: Alice must now reconstruct the previous decade and figure out how she ended up with the life she has—which is a dilemma that our character Vanessa also confronts.