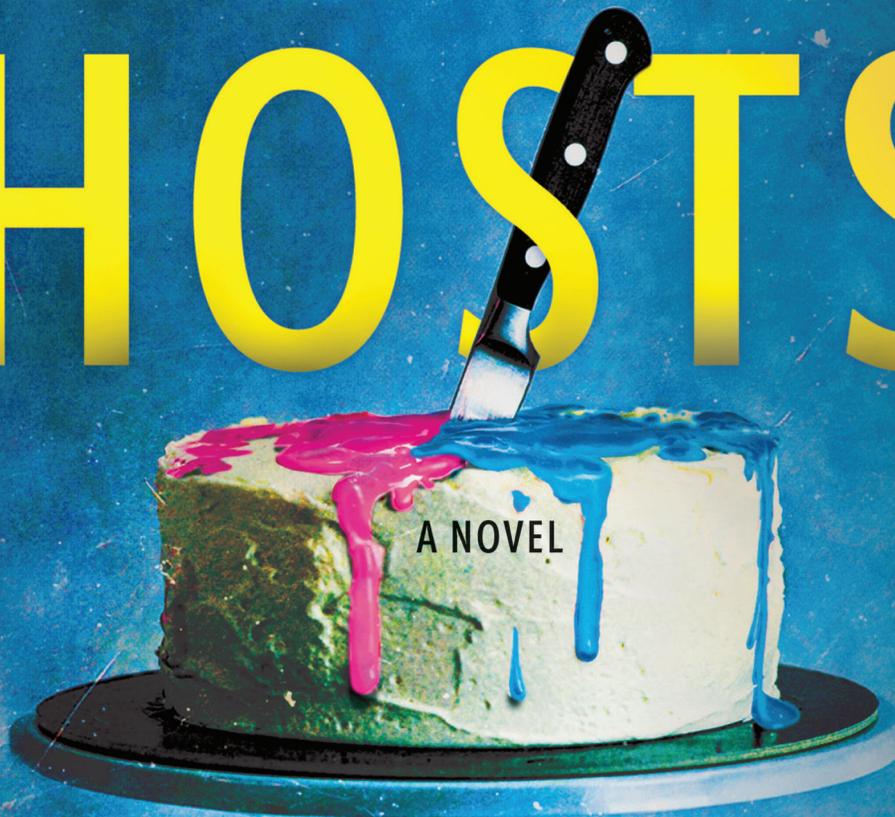


"I loved every minute of this fun, twisty wild ride!"  
—MARY KUBICA, bestselling author of *Local Woman Missing*

# THE PERFECT HOSTS

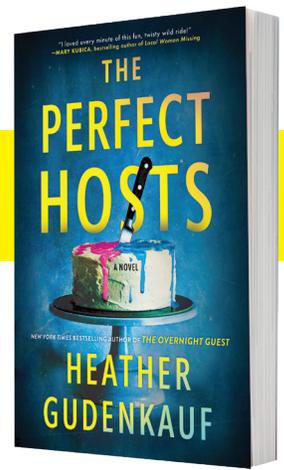


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE OVERNIGHT GUEST*

# HEATHER GUDENKAUF

# Discussion Guide

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What were your initial thoughts about Madeline and Wes Drake and their decision to host such a large, over-the-top gender reveal party?
2. How did the sprawling horse ranch and “Pistols and Pearls” theme influence the tone of the story? Did the setting feel like a character in itself?
3. How did social status, reputation, and appearances drive the characters’ actions? What role did wealth and privilege play in shaping the narrative?
4. Without revealing too much—what did you think about the explosive inciting incident? Did you see it coming? How did it shift your expectations?
5. What were your impressions of Agent Saldano? How did his background, methods, or motivations shape the investigation?
6. How are family dynamics explored throughout the novel?
7. How does the novel explore the idea that everyone is hiding something? Were there any characters whose secrets genuinely surprised you?
8. What does the title *The Perfect Hosts* mean to you after finishing the book? Who or what do you think the title truly refers to?
9. What do you think is next for Madeline, Lucy, and Wes? What does Mellie have up her sleeve?
10. What do you think the author is saying about public image vs. private truth? How does this theme resonate in today’s world of social media and curated lives?

## THE PERFECT HOSTS BOOK CLUB MENU

Serve your guests the (in)famous spread from the Drakes' unforgettable gender reveal party.

### APPETIZER

#### Mini Steak & Bacon Bites with Béarnaise Drizzle

Delicious bites of seared steak wrapped in crispy bacon, served with a rich Béarnaise sauce. Sinfully good—and just a little dangerous.



### SALAD COURSE

#### Shaved Fennel & Celery Salad

Light, crisp, and deceptively elegant with a hidden bite, just like the perfect hostess.



### MAIN EVENT

#### Barbecue Ribs or Barbecue-Spiced Hot-Smoked Salmon

Smoky, tender, and indulgent—choose your flavor of drama: fall-off-the-bone ribs or perfectly smoked salmon with a spicy kick.



### DESSERTS

#### Grown-Up S'mores

A sultry twist on a campfire classic: cinnamon graham crackers, milk chocolate ganache, candied pecans, sweet coconut, and a crown of almond-scented toasted meringue. Finished with a wisp of cotton candy because, of course—this party doesn't do subtle.

#### “Knife Cake”

A towering vanilla cake with blue and pink drip icing...and a knife stabbed straight through the center. Symbolic? Maybe. Delicious? Absolutely.

#### Champagne & Cotton Candy

Flutes of bubbly topped with pastel clouds of pink and blue cotton candy. A toast to secrets, surprises—and one truly killer night.

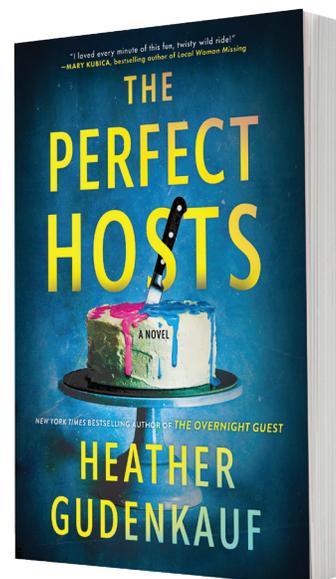
# Discussion Guide

## *THE PERFECT HOSTS PLAYLIST*

Add a little background music with a *The Perfect Host* vibe.  
Check out the playlist on Spotify:

[open.spotify.com/playlist/4knl9hTtobRVCbzgzvGX3f?si=11cbdd6c36a448d5](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4knl9hTtobRVCbzgzvGX3f?si=11cbdd6c36a448d5)

1. Wild Horses by The Rolling Stones
2. Cowboys Cry Too by Kelsea Ballerini & Noah Kahan
3. Baby Love by The Supremes
4. Cowboy Take Me Away by The Chicks
5. Cowboy Casanova by Carrie Underwood
6. A Bar Song (Topsy) by Shaboozey
7. Wildflowers by Tom Petty
8. Because of You by Reba McEntire & Kelly Clarkson
9. Fancy by Reba McEntire
10. Cowgirls Don't Cry by Brooks & Dunn, feat. Reba McEntire
11. My Fault by Shaboozey feat. Noah Cyrus
12. Sisters by Rosemary Clooney & Betty Clooney
13. You Really Got Me by The Kinks
14. Walkin' After Midnight by Patsy Cline
15. Daughter by Pearl Jam
16. Them Bones by Alice in Chains
17. Nightjar and the Nightingale by Roo Panes



# Discussion Guide

**YOU CAN CONNECT WITH HEATHER HERE:**

**Website:**

[heathergudenauf.com](http://heathergudenauf.com)

**Facebook:**

[Facebook.com/HeatherGudenaufAuthor](https://www.facebook.com/HeatherGudenaufAuthor)

**Instagram:**

[Instagram.com/heathergudenauf](https://www.instagram.com/heathergudenauf)

**TikTok:**

[TikTok.com/@heathergudenauf](https://www.tiktok.com/@heathergudenauf)

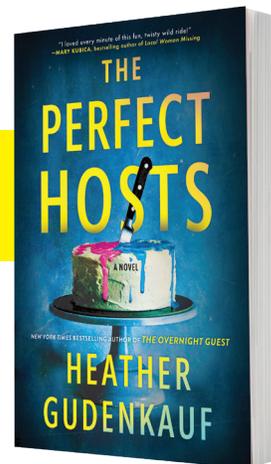


Photo Credit: Kate Cousins Photography