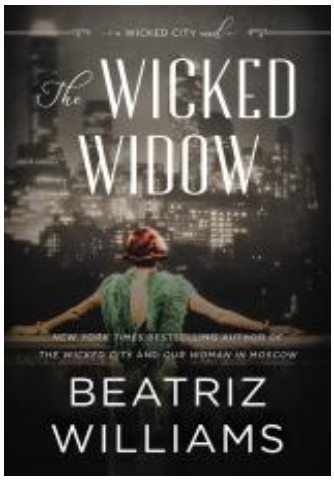
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# The Wicked Widow: A Wicked City Novel

by Beatriz Williams




## About the Book

**Gin Kelly, the wicked redhead, is back! Readers will delight in the next installment of the *Wicked City* series by *New York Times* bestselling author Beatriz Williams.**

**June 1925.** Audacious Appalachian flapper Geneva ?Gin? Kelly prepares to trade her high-flying ways for respectable marriage to Oliver Anson Marshall, a steadfast Prohibition agent who happens to hail from one of New York?s most distinguished families. But just as wedding bells chime, the head of the notorious East Coast rum-running racket --- and Anson?s mortal enemy --- turns up murdered at a society funeral, and their short-lived honeymoon bliss goes up in a spectacular blaze that sends Anson back undercover...and into the jaws of a trap from which not even Gin can rescue him. As violence explodes around her, Gin must summon all her considerable moxie to trace the tentacles of this sinister organization back to their shocking source, and face down a legendary American family at a rigged game it has no intention of losing.

**June 1998.** When Ella Dommerich?s ninetysomething society queen aunt Julie ropes her into digging up dirt on Senator (and Presidential candidate) Franklin Hardcastle in order to settle old family scores, she couldn?t be less enthusiastic. Pregnant Ella has recently ditched her unfaithful husband and settled into cozy --- if complicated --- domesticity with her almost-too-good-to-be-true musician boyfriend, Hector. But then the Hardcastle secrets lead to a web of shady dealings Ella has uncovered in her job as a financial analyst, and the bodies start to tumble out of the venerable woodwork. With the help of her ex-husband and her mysterious connection to a certain redheaded flapper, Ella digs up more than mere dirt?only to discover herself standing alone between a legendarily ruthless family and the prize it?s sought for generations.

What ugly secrets lurk in the opulent enclaves --- and bank accounts --- of America?s richest families? And can two determined women from two different generations thwart the murderous legacy of the demon liquor?

## Discussion Guide

**1.** Had you read the previous novels in the *Wicked City* series? What were you expecting --- or hoping --- would happen in this latest installment?

**2.** Aunt Julie tells Ella that ?...*she* chose you...Gin. The Redhead. You were the one she picked. God knows why.? Is she onto something? Why do you think Gin picked Ella?

**3.** Talk about the alliances between the women in this novel. How do women help women --- like Rainbow and Ella, or Ruth Mae and Gin? What about Julie Schuyler, whose long life means that she has forged relationships with both Gin and Ella?

**4.** What do you make of Therese Marshall?s sudden end? Did her last conversation with Gin foreshadow what was about to happen? Why do you think Beatriz Williams chose to kill her off?

**5.** Gin tells Anson that Louella ?knew exactly what she was doing then, and she knows exactly what she?s doing now. I don?t know how you can *think* of trusting her again.? Should Anson have listened? Why did he give Louella the benefit of the doubt? How might things have been different if he had been more suspicious of Louella?

**6.** What did you make of Joseph Bronstein, a.k.a. Christopher? Was he worthy of Gin?s trust? Were you surprised by the twists and turns his character took?

**7.** Did you suspect who Gin?s father might be? Were you satisfied with the way that mystery was resolved? How does connecting with him change Gin?s life?

**8.** When Gin returns the stolen bonds to Mrs. Hardcastle, the lady tells her, ?Consider you have a favor owed to you, whenever you choose to ask for it. This family always pays its debts.? What kind of favor might Gin ask? Or would it be wiser to steer clear of the Hardcastles for good?

**9.** What did you think when Aunt Julie announces triumphantly that she?s found the Bronstein files and ?Those Hardcastles aren?t going to know what hit them!? What?s in the files? Should they pursue it, even knowing that Patrick was probably targeted for digging too close to the truth about the Hardcastles? What would you do?

**10.** What do you think happens to Gin and Anson in the years after this story ends? Are you hoping for another *Wicked City* novel?

## Author Bio

Beatriz Williams is the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and internationally bestselling author of HUSBANDS & LOVERS, THE SUMMER WIVES, THE SECRET LIFE OF VIOLET GRANT, A HUNDRED SUMMERS, the *Wicked City* series, and several other works of historical fiction, including five novels in collaboration with fellow bestselling authors

Karen White and Lauren Willig.

A graduate of Stanford University with an MBA in Finance from Columbia University, Beatriz worked as a communications and corporate strategy consultant in New York and London before her first novel was published in 2012. Beatriz?s books have won numerous awards, have been translated into more than a dozen languages, and appear regularly in bestseller lists around the world. Her essays have appeared in magazines such as *Real Simple* and *Southern Living*, among others, and she regularly reviews fiction for the *New York Times Book Review*.

Born in Seattle, Washington, Beatriz now lives in southeastern Connecticut with her husband and four mostly grown children.

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**Publication Date:** October 26, 2021
**Genres:** Fiction, Historical Fiction, Historical Romance, Romance, Women's Fiction
**Paperback:** 448 pages
**Publisher:** William Morrow Paperbacks
**ISBN-10:** 0063142449
**ISBN-13:** 9780063142442