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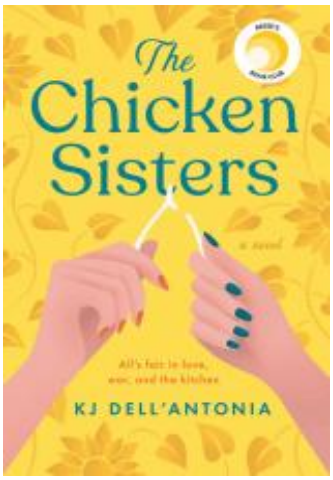
The Chicken Sisters

by KJ Dell?Antonia



About the Book

Three generations. Two chicken shacks. One recipe for disaster.

In tiny Merinac, Kansas, Chicken Mimi's and Chicken Frannie's have spent a century vying to serve up the best fried chicken in the state --- and the legendary feud between their respective owners, the Moores and the Pogociellos, has lasted just as long. No one feels the impact more than 35-year-old widow Amanda Moore, who grew up working for her mom at Mimi's before scandalously marrying Frank Pogociello and changing sides to work at Frannie's. Tired of being caught in the middle, Amanda sends an SOS to "Food Wars," the reality TV restaurant competition that promises $100,000 to the winner. But in doing so, she launches both families out of the frying pan and directly into the fire.

The last thing Brooklyn-based organizational guru Mae Moore, Amanda's sister, wants is to go home to Kansas. But when her career implodes, helping the fading Mimi's look good on "Food Wars" becomes Mae's best chance to reclaim the limelight --- even if doing so pits her against Amanda and Frannie's. Yet when family secrets become public knowledge, the sisters must choose: Will they fight with each other, or for their heritage?

Discussion Guide

1. Though they have been historically divisive in Merinac, how do the rival chicken shacks work to bring the Pogociello and Moore families together in the present of the novel?

2. Discuss the different paths Amanda and Mae take after their childhoods in Merinac. How did their upbringing dictate their adulthood choices to stay in the town or to leave?

3. What role does the reality TV show ?Food Wars? play into the two families? dynamics? Discuss the disconnect between what viewers see on the show compared with what goes on behind the scenes. Do you think this theme of

appearance versus actuality applies to reality television as a whole?

4. Consider the various connotations the word ?chicken? has in the book. How do the different characters ?play chicken? with one another?

5. Do Mae and Amanda find their current situations fulfilling? In what ways are they both stuck in their personal and professional lives? How do they break out of those patterns?

6. How do Amanda?s various family members react when they find out they?ve been picked for ?Food Wars?? How do you think you would respond?

7. What role does food play in the characters? lives? How did the descriptions and sensory details about food affect your reading experience? Did you know much about the traditions of the Midwest before reading THE CHICKEN SISTERS?

8. How does the small-town setting of Merinac make a story like this possible? Do you think it could take place in a large city? Discuss how small-town life plays into the heart and spirit of THE CHICKEN SISTERS.

9. What do you think is in store for both Amanda and Mae?

Author Bio

KJ Dell?Antonia is the former editor of *The New York Times*? Motherlode and the co-host of the #AmWriting Podcast. She is also the author of HOW TO BE A HAPPIER PARENT, IN HER BOOTS, PLAYING THE WITCH CARD, and the instant *New York Times* bestseller and Reese?s Book Club Pick, THE CHICKEN SISTERS. She lives with her family on a small farm in Lyme, New Hampshire, but retains an abiding love for her childhood in Texas and Kansas.

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