

In conversation with Lauren Weisberger

***The Wives* brilliantly skewers suburban life with all its hidden scandals, secrets and controversies. Is this true to life or did you embellish for the book?**

The book is obviously outrageous and meant to be over-the-top – but it's also true that there's an awful lot of everything going on in the suburbs. We moved out of the city a few years ago, and the parties in the book are based on real ones my husband and I attended. And all the conversations about designer plastic surgery are drawn from real life.

The fictional wives of Greenwich take exercise and spinning to the next level! Is this part of your daily routine too?

I've never been crazy into exercise. But I have a Peloton bike at home, I play tennis once a week and go to a spinning class. I am a huge fan of Lululemon sportswear too.

What's your favourite holiday destination, and (apart from a copy of *The Wives*!) what are your suitcase essentials?

I have to say I prefer a beach holiday to a city break. I got married in Anguilla and it's my favourite island. But last summer I holidayed in Nantucket, Cape Cod. My travel essentials are my Kindle, earplugs – I wear them every night – and Allbirds sneakers which are as comfortable as slippers.

You famously worked as an assistant at *American Vogue* before going on to write the huge international bestseller, *The Devil Wears Prada*. Are you still into fashion and retail therapy?

The only time I update my wardrobe is every two years when I go on book tour. I have a personal shopper, Eric, at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York and we choose outfits to see me through all eventualities. AG Jeans, DVF dresses, Joie and Theory are go-to brands. But a real post-tour indulgence is to book a long massage.

How did it feel to bring back one of fiction's most legendary characters, Miranda Priestly, from *The Devil Wears Prada*?

I did get a little shaky when I was writing her – as though she was still peering over my shoulder – but it was fun to bring her back.

Can you tell us a little about your writing routine?

I work from an office at home and a co-writing space elsewhere. I find there are too many distractions at home and I like getting out of the house and seeing other people. I share the space with fellow writer Jane Green – and we occasionally get together to have lunch.

What advice do you give to aspiring writers?

People often ask me for advice. I tell them the hardest part of writing your first book is to carve out the time to do it. For *The Devil Wears Prada* I had a full-time job, so I would sit down for two hours on a Friday night and do what I could. I advise others to break up the process into small manageable pieces and deadlines.

You're a mother of two and a very busy, successful novelist. How do you wind down?

My happy place is very early in the morning out on the back porch drinking coffee before the kids wake up. But it almost never happens! I prefer a night in eating ice cream and watching Netflix over going out. I am a walking American cliché – I loved *The Crown*.

Do you get the time to read much yourself when you're not writing?

I'm in a book club, but like all book clubs we spend a huge amount of time choosing which books to read, without actually reading them. I like the social aspect of book clubs – it's all about the eating and drinking. My favourite tippie is a Dirty Martini.

Any favourite books or recommendations?

The books I read come from word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family. I have *The Female Persuasion* by Meg Wolitzer and Emily Giffin's book *All We Ever Wanted* on my list.