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A Room of Her Own Just Got Bigger



What She's Reading Now: Chandra Hoffman

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Chandra Hoffman, author of [Chosen](#), walks us through her tower of books--read, dogeared, and on her list.

Welcome to my dangerously-sagging nightstand—it's overloaded, and from IKEA. These are my stacks, in three wobbly towers:

RECENTLY READ

Leah Stewart's [Husband and Wife](#)—I devoured this story in one four-hour binge. Writer parents of a toddler/baby are seemingly happy when the husband, a novelist, reveals that his upcoming novel *Infidelity* is not fiction. Compelling premise that does not disappoint! The husband puts the fate of the book and their marriage in his wife's hands. The story plays out in surprising and believable ways, filled with sharp characterization, realistic details and lyrical prose. I loved the way Stewart perfectly captured aspects of married life with young children, who were never props but real-life needy, lovable and consuming.

My husband and I are at that age where marriages are dissolving around us, where we are sitting in bars and playgrounds listening to separate stories, debating over dinner at home where our loyalties should lie, aching for our friends and their children.

After finishing *Husband and Wife* at 3 am, I paced the house for an hour. I spent a long time listening to my kids breathe, touching their hair and cheeks, and at last curling around my sleeping husband, because what we have is precious and fragile, worth protecting. Stewart captures this perfectly.

Laura Brodie's [Love in a Time of Homeschooling](#)—I picked up this memoir because I am taking my kids (8, 5 and 3) out of school to travel on book tour with me this year and have been hungry for real-life tales of homeschooling. Brodie writes about the challenges and successes with her ten-year-old daughter on their one-year 'sabbatical' from public school with honesty and humor. Certain chapters were practical and applicable, others more cautionary. Her chapter on the dark days of February inspired me to get some busy work out of the way this summer while my kids are fresh, leaving February for pajamas, Calvin and Hobbes and hot cocoa in front of the fire. Brodie's love and commitment to her daughter shines through—a captivating read for anyone curious about the subject.

Barbara Kingsolver's [Small Wonder](#)—I went slowly with this dense, inspiring collection of post 9/11 essays. I spent the majority of the months following Sept 11th in a NICU fog with my critically ill son, buffered from the world's horror by my own all-consuming anxiety and grief. Reading Kingsolver's politically charged and thoughtfully rendered essays on human nature, government, pacifism, patriotism and environmental issues opened my eyes to a time in recent history where I was absent from the world at large. Her chapter on domestic drama. The meals in this book will make you hungry and the questions it raises are food for thought.

Linda Dobson's [The Ultimate Book of Homeschooling Ideas](#) -- Practical tips for my upcoming adventure. I keep both fiction and nonfiction on my nightstand. Since I tend to Hoover novels in all-nighter binges, which means I spend the next day jittered out on caffeine and Nutella, I need alternative How-To tomes, light tidbits of information and ideas. This book is perfect for a quick chapter before lights out.

TO READ

Sandra Kring [Carry Me Home](#)

Heather Gudenkauf [The Weight of Silence](#)

Barbara Kingsolver [The Lacuna](#)

Leah Stewart [The Myth of You and Me](#)

Anthony Conforti [Acalan](#)