

Match Me If You Can Study Guide

Match Me If You Can by Susan Elizabeth Phillips

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Plot Summary

Match Me If You Can by Susan Elizabeth Phillips is a romance featuring a feisty, young woman, Annabelle Granger, who wants to run her own business. When she inherits her grandmother's matchmaking business, she talks her friend, Molly, into setting an appointment with Heath. Heath, 'the Python' Champion, is a successful sports agent who has decided that he needs a wife. Heath grew up in a poor trailer court and wants a trophy wife. He has an ideal fantasy of a woman that he wants Annabelle to find.

Annabelle has competition. Portia Powers is also hunting for a wife for Heath. Powers is just like her name. She is a powerhouse who never puts a wrong foot forward. Annabelle seems to find her feet in all types of situations that do not present well as a powerful business woman. Powers' clients are names. Annabelle's clients see their names on Social Security checks.

Heath has a sidekick who will become his full-fledged partner. Bodie looks like he belongs to a biker club and is seen as Heath's bodyguard. Powers spies on Heath's meeting with Annabelle's client's introduction to Heath and is caught by Bodie. Powers shows her snobbery to Bodie but can't seem to stay away from him. Bodie becomes her dirty little secret.

Annabelle and Heath are attracted to each other but will not admit it. Heath continues to meet women who are never right for him. Annabelle says what she thinks, and she and Heath spar.

Heath takes Annabelle with him when he has meetings. Bodie drives. Bodie likes Annabelle and sees the attraction long before Heath will admit it.

Through one situation or another Annabelle becomes acquainted with many of the football league stars and charms them in a homelike way. Heath comes to her when he is tired. Heath also has a longstanding grudge with the head of one of teams, the Stars. Heath tries to use Annabelle's friendship with the lady to make up the long ago disagreement. Finally through a number of crazy situations, Heath has enough. He calls Powers and Annabelle into his office to tell them each that he will meet one more client from each matchmaking agency.

Annabelle introduces Heath to a woman who appears perfect for him. She doesn't make a wrong move. She knows people and has sophistication which Heath enjoys. Everyone but Bodie see that they look very good together. Bodie sees that Heath never relaxes with her. On the night he had decided to ask Delaney to marry him, he gets a call from Annabelle who has too many big footballs players in her house. When Delaney goes to the party with Heath and sees his real life up close and personal, she and Heath both know that they don't belong together.

Heath and Annabelle have a falling out. Annabelle invites the MVP quarterback of the Stars to a birthday dinner with her parents. Heath manages to take over the invitation



and learns that Annabelle actually was a debutante and is "old money." He has already decided to marry her but hasn't asked her yet. Unfortunately, he tries it in front of her very successful family. She doesn't hear "I love you" and refuses. She disappears.

Heath learns exactly how much he loves Annabelle. He has never trusted love since he had seen too many of his father's women come and go. It takes Powers coming over to demand her introduction to help Heath understand that his need for control, because of his past, will ruin his future.

All ends well as Heath and Annabelle eventually come together.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

Chapter One opens as Mr. Bronicki is arguing with Annabelle and keeping her from going to her car and going to an appointment with Heath Champion. When she gets to the car, a homeless man is sleeping off his drunk under the Crown Victoria. Annabelle finally gets on the road and realizes that she will be a few minutes late. She has trouble parking but finally makes it. She is nine minutes late. The receptionist refuses to let her into Heath's office. Annabelle claims her one minute and heads into the office. She gets in and after a few comments Heath allows her to remain.

Annabelle notices just how sexy he is. She hadn't planned to notice that at all. She doesn't like overly confident, successful men. She has had to live with three all her life. She calls them over achievers. She also makes up her mind to be aggressive for once in her life. She refuses to leave when Heath stands up to show her out. She repeats his own history to him and demands that he give her a chance. She reminds him of his struggles to get someone to hire him as an agent and take a chance on the new kid on the block.

Heath gives her the chance. He offers to meet one woman for twenty minutes for drinks the next night. Annabelle must come and make the introduction and stay for the twenty minutes. Annabelle tells him that he is demeaning a woman. He says that the right woman won't mind because she will have a sweet disposition.

As Annabelle starts back for her home and office, the phone rings. It is her mother who is retired from a very successful career in banking. Her mom wants her to settle down and to become a successful accountant. Mrs. Granger tells her that Doug, Annabelle's brother, will help her find a position. Annabelle doesn't want to be an accountant. Her mother just goes right ahead giving advice and practically ordering Annabelle to do as her mother wants. Her mother mentions all the things Annabelle has done in her life that have not panned out. She even says something about the broken engagement.

Chapter One Analysis

Chapter One introduces the main characters and the major plot. Annabelle wants to own her own business and she needs a high profile client to move her into the big leagues. Heath is the high profile client. Annabelle has some antagonism toward him before she meets him simply because he is a self-made, highly successful male.

Phillips allows the reader to hear Annabelle's internal dialogue. The reader learns that she is usually passive. Phillips pushes her out of her comfort zone and shows her gearing herself up to be aggressive. Phillips lets the reader know that Annabelle is highly motivated about obtaining this job. It won't matter if she likes the client or not. Annabelle is going to get his account and marry him off. Phillips uses humor throughout



the book; however, the internal dialogue concerning Heath shows that the spark of attraction is there. It also illustrates that Annabelle is going to ignore it as much as anyone can ignore a drop dead good looking man. Annabelle is just happy that he isn't drop dead gorgeous.

Phillips is able to make the reader see that Heath has some interest in Annabelle. Just giving her a chance when he had already made up his mind not to hire her was a good indication. Phillips has a real talent for showing the character's disposition and characteristics. While Heath is looking for a decorative wife, Annabelle snags his interest.

After leaving the office, the reader is filled in with part of the back story. Kate Granger, Annabelle's mother, calls. It is obvious that Annabelle's brothers have been overachievers all their lives. Kate understands that personality but she doesn't understand her own daughter. Annabelle was able to stand up to Heath and acquire him as a client. She doesn't stand up to her mother. Annabelle's grandmother seems to have been a soul mate for Annabelle. Her grandmother didn't demand the focus on what she wanted and try to force Annabelle to remain focused on it forever.

Once again, Phillips allows the reader more information by using Annabelle's inner dialogue and her memories of her one brother's last email about his \$200,000 a year. She remembers the other brother's birthday card with the disgusting nickname of Spud and reminding her she isn't getting any older. She better get with it. Even her father gets in on the act of wanting her to grow up.

Annabelle has a number of challenges ahead of her.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary

Chapter Two introduces us to Heath in his own words. He is in a sports bar called Waterworks which caters to the different teams and their fans. Women have fountains to run through and become a very wet, sexy body to attract attention. The new rookies have plenty of money, many for the first time, and are willing to buy gifts. Heath visits the sports bar often to keep up with what is happening in the sports world. He makes himself available as an agent to the men. This is the first time for the reader to see Heath at work. He is there to see Dean Robillards. Dean will replace Kevin Tucker as quarterback for the Stars, and Dean's agent has just died in an accident. Heath doesn't push but makes Dean come to him. Heath makes sure he is in the right place at the right time.

Heath has some conversations with others. The reader mainly sees the one with Sean Palmer. The reader learns that Heath has been on the wagon concerning sex. Heath thinks about his own training for marriage. Heath is planning to be faithful, obviously. Between his own thoughts and Sean's conversation, the reader learns that Heath is quite ethical and takes care of his clients because he truly cares about them.

Heath thinks about Annabelle but as a pest to get rid of. He plans to meet the woman the next night and make it clear that he is finished with Annabelle's company. He isn't sure why he ever agreed to meet anyone.

The next night comes and Annabelle shows up right on time with a blonde knockout. Gwen Phelps and Heath talk small talk until Heath gives Annabelle a look. She gets them started on Gwen's interests. At exactly twenty minutes, Annabelle gets up and Gwen says good night. Heath wants her number. Gwen says no thank you but she will only be friends. Heath can't believe it. However, since they had a deal and Heath did like her, Heath signs on for six months.

Chapter Two Analysis

Phillips introduces Heath in chapter two from Heath's point of view. Phillips gives us an insight to Heath by his inner dialogue. First the reader sees Heath in action. He is working. He networks in sports bars. Apparently in the past, he has been very welcoming to the young women who follow the boys and anyone rich who is connected to the sports scene. He has refused enough offers for sex that the crowd is talking about Heath. Heath is definitely planning to be a good husband and to make a marriage work. He has set his sights on a home and family. Heath thinks about the women who have moved through his life. None of them stuck. He wants a woman who will stick. Someone who will never betray him or leave him is his biggest desire in a wife. Of course, he has some very real fantasies of what that woman will be.



Phillips presents Heath as a man of principle as she has him talk to a young rookie who is his client. Heath's inner dialogue tells the reader that he will take care to see that his clients do not get into trouble and do not make bad contract decisions. While Heath is a hard-nosed business man, he is honest and aboveboard in his dealings with people. He has learned to make any deals win-win situations.

Phillips tells the reader Heath's backstory through his inner dialogue. The memories of Heath's near marriage when he mistakenly received the invitation to the wedding shows that he has good reason to feel used by women. The invitation made it clear that he was a convenience for the fiancée. Her grandparents and parents celebrated their fiftieth and twenty-fifth wedding anniversary on the same day. Heath is the part of her puzzle to make the three generation anniversary idea work. He and the woman aren't anything but part of a line. When he pointed it out to her, she refused to change the date. It didn't give Heath much revenge to see her married on Valentine's Day and the other anniversaries to be the next strand in the family chain. A year later, the chain was broken. The family had a divorce.

Phillips allows the reader to watch that first introduction of Annabelle's candidate for Heath. Of course, the woman is a knock-out and well able to have interesting conversation. Heath is hooked. Gwen Phelps refuses him. Heath sticks with the deal and signs on with Annabelle for six months. He goes over the contract and makes some changes. Heath doesn't try to welch on the bet with her, and he doesn't change her contract in any unreasonable way.



Chapter Three

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter Three introduces the reader to Portia Powers. She hunts for Annabelle's office. Portia saw an advertisement on Heath's desk and wants to scout out the competition. She had lost some clients to another agency and was determined not to lose another client. Portia is relieved to discover the little old house and see that the name of a non-threatening agency had been changed.

Portia is obsessed with everything being perfect. She makes her perfect appearance her god. She has risen by hard work and plans not to lose any ground. She visits her appointment for a skin treatment before she returns to her office and weighs in the women who work for her. This time she has one rebellion. She offers good pay and better benefits. Portia would think that anyone who was honored to be noticed and mentored by her would be more appreciative.

The chapter ends as Portia goes back to work to find Heath a wife. She is determined to be the one who finds that wife.

Chapter Three Analysis

Portia Powers is played against Annabelle to bring out the character differences. Portia is the highly driven successful woman in the mix. Portia is out for herself and her climb up the ladder. She has no friends and no time for anyone. The picture Phillips gives the reader of the weigh in will make any reader understand who Powers is. Power is about power and control. She will make other women successful within her own guidelines. She will force them to fulfill her expectations even when it comes to size. While she says that weight is one thing that women can control, she insists on controlling her employees.

Phillips helps the reader to feel sorry for Powers. She has been caught in trying to be a successful woman in the man's world. Since she is a matchmaker, she has to force women into the molds men expect. Powers in her job must become a man and demand of her women and herself things that men believe are important. She can see no other way than to fall back on tried and true methods. Powers keeps herself and her women under old mores of society.

Powers tries to give to the community. She mentors women in a woman's shelter. None of them understand her principles. They simply won't understand. Powers doesn't understand that many of those she mentors are more concerned with a roof and food than on being successful. Successful with a big S. Being sure of survival is enough for many of the women. Powers does not give out warm hugs. She is basically a hard hitting icicle.



Chapter Four

Chapter Four Summary

As Chapter Four begins Annabelle is talking to Heath in an attempt to interview him about the type of woman he wants. As they hang up, the reader learns that she is visiting with Gwen Phelps Bingham. Gwen is a married woman who did Annabelle a favor on the spur of the moment. We also learn that the husband Ian knows about it. After some talk about both Heath and Ian being very intelligent men, and that Ian is losing hair, Annabelle leaves to go meet Heath. She is riding with him to an appointment.

Annabelle meets Bodie Gray who is driving so Heath can work or be interviewed. Annabelle doesn't understand the relationship. Bodie calls Heath boss, and Heath tells Annabelle that Bodie is an athlete who got his knee messed up before he could climb the NFL ladder. Bodie answers many of Annabelle's questions about Heath's likes.

Annabelle is sent home in a cab by Bodie. She isn't home long when Mr. Bronicki appears at her door. He wants Annabelle to find him a new wife. He paid \$200 in 1989 for his deceased wife and so he isn't satisfied. Annabelle's grandmother had the motto of a satisfied customer or the money back. Mr. Bronicki is demanding satisfaction. He wants a blond who isn't too skinny and maybe 30. The 80-year-old feels frisky. Annabelle closed the door, thinking that she could see how she must have "sucker" written across her forehead.

Chapter Four Analysis

In Chapter Four, Phillips gives the reader the opportunity to watch the rapport between Heath and Annabelle grow. Annabelle can't resist making a few wisecracks. Heath is very tolerant. The reader can see the sexual tension between the two of them. Heath reminds her that he is the client. She is supposed to be nicer. It is hard to believe that Heath wouldn't put someone out of the car on the side of the highway if he didn't really like them and want to know more about them.

The interaction between Bodie and Heath indicates that Heath is capable of real friendship. The two men have a give and take as they drive through the traffic. Phillips also indicates that Bodie seems to like Annabelle. He teases her during the trip. He even tells her that Heath has never had a redhead.

While Heath is a serious businessman and takes care of business, Phillips shows that he can laugh at himself. His liking for people seems real. He is not putting on an act.

Annabelle's compassion is illustrated again in the scene with Mr. Bronicki. Who would even listen to the old man about his dissatisfaction after a dozen years of marriage to the woman Annabelle's grandmother had found for him. Annabelle is willing to be part of

Mr. Bronicki's entertainment for the day. She even promises to try to find him a 30-year-old trophy wife to live with him on Social Security. Phillips lets Annabelle see many flaws in herself because she isn't the Portia Powers success. While Annabelle is feeling less than, the reader sees her as more and more likeable.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary

Bodie works out with Heath as Chapter Five opens. They are having a "man" talk about the matchmakers. Bodie wants to know more about Portia. He hasn't met her. Heath tells him that there is a 180 degree difference between them. As the scene changed, Portia is overlooking an introduction meeting of Heath's to one of her clients. Annabelle is sitting in on the meeting. Portia and Annabelle neither like the situation but Annabelle is more than fair to the women in question.

Heath hadn't told Annabelle that she was going to stay for Powers' introduction. She was surprised. However, Annabelle was a good sport with the women and even recommended one highly. Annabelle sniped at Heath every time they were alone.

While Portia has been circling the block and watching Heath, Annabelle, and Powers women of choice, Bodie has followed. He makes his presence known and forces Portia to go for a drink with him. She certainly doesn't want Heath to know that she has been spying on him. Portia sees Bodie as something less than a ex-con or a member of a motorcycle gang. She tries to buy him off with two fifties but he demands a date. She is forced to try to keep him from telling Heath about her peaking in the restaurant window at him and the women.

Once Heath and Annabelle sit through three meetings, Annabelle has complained about hunger enough that Heath takes her to a favorite restaurant to feed her. She learns that he speaks Italian. They actually talk to each other. Their conversations lead to Annabelle in her sniping saying that she knows men of his ilk. She mentions her brothers. Heath makes a comment about her being neglected. Annabelle says she wishes she had been neglected a little. She catalogues all the things in her early life including fencing lessons. Heath looks at her and thinks that she had the kind of childhood he dreamed of. Heath has thought of her as a wood fairy a couple of times since she is a small woman with curly hair and big eyes. He is calling her Tinker Bell in his mind.

Chapter Five Analysis

Once again the reader sees the friendship between Heath and Bodie. They work together well. Bodie asks about the matchmakers and Phillips has Heath talk about the personalities of the two women. They are the exact opposites.

Phillips proceeds to show the reader more about Annabelle. Annabelle meets Heath for drinks with her first candidate for Heath. Annabelle keeps the conversation going but it soon is evident that they don't have a good match. After the woman leaves, Heath keeps Annabelle at the bar to meet his candidate from the Powers Agency. Annabelle is telling him why she won't stay when he takes a phone call and leaves the room.



Annabelle sees the woman enter the bar and can't leave her standing so she meets her. After telling the woman that she is Heath's boss, she finds she likes the woman. Heath still gives Annabelle the signal to get rid of the woman. Annabelle fights for a second chance for her. Heath still holds Annabelle at the bar for his next meeting with another of Powers' candidate.

While the reader sees Annabelle's genuinely nice personality, Portia is out spying on the competition. Portia doesn't want to admit that she is afraid that she is losing Heath as a client. When Portia sees Annabelle remain at Heath's side as a Power candidate who is her offering meets Heath, she is really angry. After a few trips around the block and then staring into the building, Bodie appears. Phillips uses Bodie to show that Portia will do whatever it takes to keep her clients. Bodie appears to be blackmailing Portia and she goes along with it. It never occurs to Portia not to believe that Annabelle will sabotage Portia's women. The reader soon understands that Portia never thinks that anyone would help the other guy. Portia knows what it takes to get ahead, and she doesn't forget it for a minute.

Phillips makes her best comparison between Annabelle and Portia as Heath finally takes Annabelle for something to eat. While Annabelle can't resist her smart remarks that are designed to put Heath in his place, Annabelle eats. She enjoys every bite and Heath can see that. His inner dialogue comments on seeing a woman who knows how to eat. Phillips gives the reader the menu. Annabelle definitely doesn't count calories and doesn't fuss about whether she should eat too many calories. She has told Heath that she is hungry and he better feed her after making her sit through the other introductions.

Once again she tries to talk Heath into giving one of Portia's candidate's a try. Heath points out that she doesn't take care of her own business too well. Annabelle shrugs that off. Phillips has Heath analyzing Annabelle as she makes another swipe at him. He thinks she was neglected because her brothers were so good. Annabelle gives the reader a look at the family life of Annabelle. She might be hassled by the family but she was and is loved. They pushed all kinds of opportunities on her. She mentions all kinds of lessons including fencing. This is a plant for later. Heath is seeing Annabelle as a flake and he can't see beyond it. Phillips has Heath have some sexual fantasies about her, but he won't admit that they are anything but a passing thought that means nothing.

Heath's pet name, Tinker Bell, coming up more than once is a hint from Phillips that Heath's attraction is growing whether he will admit it or not.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary

Chapter Six begins with more information about Portia. Apparently Heath called her and told her his new plan of having Annabelle sit in on the meetings. Portia arranged to surprise him on his plane trip to Tampa. Heath with his inner dialogue tells the reader that she is a female Heath. She does what it takes to win. She is very aggressive in business. While he understands her objection to Annabelle taking the meetings with her candidates, she is smart enough not to fight with Heath. She doesn't like it. Heath tells Portia that she doesn't have to worry. While Portia is a shark, Annabelle is a tadpole. Annabelle helps the women to relax and Heath can see their personality better when they are relaxed.

The next short scene occurs after Annabelle has introduced Heath to a candidate of hers. Heath gets along with her and wants to have that second date. As Annabelle and Heath are getting ready to leave the table, Heath pulls out his full money clip. Annabelle carefully explains that the lady he is looking for would like a discreet credit card rather than flashing money. Heath mentions that his clients are kids who are looking for money but he sees that he needs a money clip for business and a credit card for courtship. In this scene we learn that Heath has a middle name which starts with a "D". Annabelle wants to learn the well-kept secret.

A very short scene featuring Portia putting more pressure on her employees to find the perfect woman for Heath comes next. Not only are they to work the clubs but she wants them in department stores and other places high class women gather. Portia also has to arrange the promised date with Bodie.

In the next scene Annabelle visits the university campus and goes to the Graduate School of Business and other business concerns. She does add a School of Music. While she didn't feel she found a woman for Heath, she did sign up some new clients for Perfect for You.

The last scene in the chapter takes the reader back to Heath. He has to visit the Stars headquarters and speak with Phoebe Calebow, the owner. He likes to do business with Ron McDermitt, the general manager. Heath had pulled a few dirty tricks on Phoebe to force a higher contract than she wanted to offer seven years before. The lady holds a grudge. Heath had been young and starting out. He had since learned to make deals a win-win situation. When Heath arrives, he goes to meet Phoebe. Dean Robillard was talking with her. Phoebe does what she can to discourage her players from signing with Heath as the agent. Phoebe and Heath come to an agreement for the player they are discussing. Before Heath can leave, Annabelle's friend, Molly Tucker comes onto the field with her baby and toddler. Heath doesn't do well with kids but he tries. Molly wants to know how the matchmaking is coming along. The reader can tell Heath does like Molly. Before Heath leaves the field Molly and her sister, Phoebe have discussed the



next day and they get together. A get together that Heath's matchmaker had been invited to. Finally he thought he had found a way to spend some time socially with Phoebe. Phoebe had never invited him to anything and none of the husbands would invite him while she wouldn't.

Chapter Six Analysis

Phillips continues to tell us more about Portia as the chapter begins. She is actually a female Heath. She smiles in the right places and says the right things. She tries to control the client without seeming to do it. Phillips uses Portia and Bodie as a subplot and has to let the reader recognize her as the story continues. She isn't a threat to Annabelle on a personal level because Phillips has Heath say that he is not attracted to her.

This whole chapter builds the characters and shows their development. Annabelle explains special nuances to Heath about flashing money in front of a woman he would choose. Annabelle snipes at him like she would her brothers as he pushes her into doing things his way, but she is careful of his feeling when she tells him something like the money clip and credit card idea. She is not one to hit below the belt. Phillips teaches the reader to like Annabelle with little things rather than trying to make us see her with a big messy canvas. Phillips is very good at showing us those subtle little things that really tell it all about a character.

Phillips takes the reader back to Portia. Portia is scared. She can't lose Heath as a client. She goes back to her office and puts on the pressure to her employees. She can't understand why people can't see that she is helping them. She doesn't see that it is all about Portia and her success rather than her helping them to success.

The contrast is placed before the reader again as a short scene with Annabelle is next. Annabelle goes out to meet women herself. She is friendly with them and gives them an opportunity to meet Heath and then takes some on as clients. While she is interested in making her matchmaking company work, she wants good things for her clients as well.

Phillips returns to Heath. He is back in town and he has to meet Phoebe Calebow to discuss one of his client's contracts. Phillips has Heath think more about the back story here. When he first started as an agent, he was desperate and dumb. He crossed Phoebe and forced her into a contract that wasn't fair to her. He thought he caught a break at the time when the newspapers got into the feud but in the long run he made an enemy. He can't break into the social Star group because of this and all the business negotiations are strained. Phillips again takes the subtle way to tell us about it. Phoebe has Dean Robillards at the practice field when Heath arrives. Phoebe lets it be known that she doesn't want any of her players to be agented by Heath.

Molly, Annabelle's friend, appears before Heath leaves Phoebe. Heath has a problem with Molly's daughter. The four year old has talked him out of a couple of cell phones. He hasn't told Kevin because he doesn't want to upset the family. He has tried



everything to regain ground with Phoebe so he is careful. By the time the chapter ends, trouble is coming. Heath learns of a get together on Saturday, and Heath sees his chance to be around Phoebe with no business benefit. He is going to take advantage of Annabelle's wish to please to get an invite. Phillips is showing Heath's more aggressive side with this situation. Heath has his flaws and Phillips makes the reader aware of them.



Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven Summary

Chapter Seven finds Heath traveling to Annabelle's home and business. He can't reach her by phone, and he is anxious to get himself invited to the party that Molly mentioned. When he arrives, Annabelle is in the middle of an argument with Mr. Bronicki about his satisfaction and wanting a new woman. Annabelle sees Heath and he tells her to finish talking to Mr. Bronicki. Mr. Bronicki says something about a nephew lawyer and that makes Annabelle call on Heath—her Harvard lawyer. Heath takes care of Mr. Bronicki in a hurry. Mr. Bronicki leaves. Annabelle turns on Heath and calls him mean. She follows Mr. Bronicki into her front yard and soothes his feathers.

Annabelle comes back in, and she and Heath discover her unplugged phone. When Heath tells her that it is bad for her business not to be available, she agrees with him. Heath is surprised that she doesn't get defensive and fight back. Heath goes on to tell Annabelle that he will attend the party with her. When he finds out it is Phoebe's party, he is more pleased. Annabelle hadn't known that Heath and Phoebe had such a bad relationship. She starts to tell him something about the party but he stops her and insists she be a team player and get him what he wants. She agrees.

A few hours later, Annabelle's phone rings. Heath had a date with Rachel, Annabelle's candidate, and the call is from Rachel. While things had gone so well at the first meeting, Rachel is panicked. The date was going flat. Annabelle tried to be unhappy that things were not going well.

Chapter Seven Analysis

Phillips shows the reader that Heath is becoming more attracted to Annabelle when he takes time out of his day to go to her home when he can't reach her by phone. He could have easily sent Bodie or another person from the office. Once the phone was on, he could have taken care of the party invitation.

Heath realizes that he hasn't felt so good all day until he is with Annabelle again. Heath enjoys watching the struggle between Mr. Bronicki and Annabelle. It confuses Heath when Annabelle asks him to be her lawyer and explain things to Mr. Bronicki. When he acted like a Harvard lawyer, Annabelle calls him mean and worries about Mr. Bronicki's feelings.

The difference between Annabelle and Portia Powers shows again as Annabelle makes smart remarks to Heath. Any reader knows that if Heath didn't like Annabelle, she would have been fired long ago. However he is amused and even compares her to Pebbles of Flintstone fame. He keeps adding pet names. He might call her a flake but his thoughts are complimentary.



The reader can see Annabelle's love for Heath growing. Phillips shows Annabelle a little unexplainably depressed when she thinks about Rachel's date with Heath. Her depression lifts when the date turns sour.



Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight Summary

Chapter Eight begins with Bodie and Portia on their date. Bodie took her to a sports bar and even pushed her into playing volleyball with him. He enjoys teasing the uptight lady. She can't remember sexual bantering before with a man. Bodie tells her he likes to dominate a strong woman. During the time Bodie is changing into shorts, Portia gets a call relieving her of a woman she was mentoring. She is told that there isn't anyone left for her to mentor. The lower class women need more nourishing than Portia can give. Portia adds this to her list of failures. It makes her more desperate. Bodie comes back and they play volleyball. As Bodie teases her, he suggests that she sleep with him to ensure his keeping his mouth shut. When Bodie takes Portia home, she expects him to insist on coming up to her apartment. She is surprised when he leaves her at the elevator door.

As the sections change, Annabelle is getting some breakfast while waiting for time to meet Heath and go to Phoebe's party. After she orders, she sees Rosemary coming from another room. Rosemary is Rob. He has had a sex change. Rosemary wishes they could be friends but Annabelle can't deal with that. She had really been hurt by him not telling her about his sex change coming up until the day she was trying on a wedding dress. Rosemary brings Kate, Annabelle's mother back into the conversation. He knows that Annabelle has always had a problem with her mother because Annabelle doesn't have the killer instinct of the rest of the family.

Heath and Annabelle ride out to the Calebow home for the party. Annabelle can tell exactly when Heath has spotted the pink balloons. Molly comes out of the Calebow's house with Pippi. Pippi gets to tell Heath that they are having a Princess Party. The Calebow twins had volunteered at a daycare and were having a party for the little girls. Heath acts like he knew it all the time and smiled at Molly telling her he is happy to help. Annabelle knows he is furious. She didn't realize how furious until he fires her. Annabelle can't believe she has sabotaged herself and her business. She thinks perhaps her mother is right. She doesn't want success.

Chapter Eight Analysis

As Chapter Eight begins Phillips has Portia acting exactly opposite of her normal self. She is doing what Bodie wants to do. She is also glad that her friends would never frequent the same places Bodie does. Portia's phone call at the bar shows her vulnerable side. Portia is losing too many things during these chapters. She can't afford to lose Heath as a client. She will grit her teeth and get along with Bodie. During the date, she realizes that the other women notice him. She sees what an athlete he is and learns that he has played for the pros. She has talked herself into letting him bed her because she has to so he will keep quiet about her spying on Heath. She doesn't think it



will be a bad thing. She rather likes having the decision taken from her. Phillips surprises her and the reader when Bodie walks her to the elevator and does not come up. The reader has been seeing Bodie as a better guy than one who blackmails for sex.

Phillips finally tells us who Rob is in the middle section of the chapter. Rob has had sex change. Essentially he had led Annabelle on. He had let her believe that she had found the love of her life and when she is being fitted for her wedding dress, he takes his first hormones. He finally tells her that he is a woman in a man's body and he is going to fix that. Phillips uses Rob to tell us more about Annabelle's experience with her family. She is considered the screw up and her mother is always trying to make her someone she is not. Kate's first thought when Annabelle told her the wedding was off to ask what Annabelle had done. Rob as Rosemary tells Annabelle that he wishes they could be friends again. Annabelle just wants to forget she knew him. Annabelle's compassion doesn't reach that far and the reader can understand that.

One of the big moments occurs in the last section of the chapter. Heath realizes that Annabelle has put him into a position that he will look bad. Heath is furious and fires Annabelle. While Heath puts on his business face and smiles and helps with the party in front of Phoebe and Molly, he got tricked. He passes Annabelle some good glares as he learns that Dan and Kevin disappeared off the face of the earth to escape this party. This isn't the social thing he thought it was. Little girls are not his thing.

Annabelle sees herself losing the matchmaker business because of her impulsiveness. She also realizes that she is still reacting like a kid with her supermen brothers. She wants them to be taken down a peg... not something that really hurts but one where they screw up once in a while. Annabelle tries not to cry as Molly and Pippi corral the little girls.



Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine Summary

In Chapter Nine Heath was wishing this was a teenage party. He liked teenagers. He saw little girls as a mystery. He grew angrier at Annabelle as he came around to the back of the house. He saw Phoebe immediately. Phoebe put him to work putting out magic wands for each of the girls. It didn't take long for Pippi to find him and immediately she asked to see his phone. She had asked to see his new \$500 phone when Heath was at Kevin's the week before. Heath had never seen it again. Heath was reluctant to say anything and have Kevin or Molly think he was criticizing their kids. Pippi informs Heath that she luvvvs phones. He holds one of his phones to let her look at it. Annabelle comes out on the patio dressed in a princess dress. The crown in her red hair was sparkling in the sun. Heath forgot his phone. When he came aware again, Pippi and the phone were gone.

The little girls were making things at the tables as well as being made up. Heath was asked to be the official photographer and take all the girls' pictures. After one of the girls wanted a picture with the Princess, Annabelle was in every shot. She did a good job of ignoring Heath as he talked to his subjects to get them to laugh.

He got a break and pulled out his second phone. He remembered Pippi when he saw her making a beeline for him. She wanted that second phone that he had quickly put in his pocket.

Molly gathered the girls around her for a Daphne the rabbit story. Daphne was at a princess party and each of the girls was named as she became part of the story. After the story, refreshments came out. Everything was pink. They had pink bread for the sandwiches. There was also pink punch and a pink cake that was shaped like a castle with moat and all. After refreshments, they brought out a dragon piñata. The little girls couldn't break it. After they had had a good time trying, Heath took over and sent the candy filling all over the yard. He helped in the distribution. Phoebe continued to snipe at him. It didn't look like he had gained any ground with her.

As the party ended and the girls were gone, Phoebe, Molly, and Annabelle were talking about a book club retreat. They mentioned names Heath knew from football. He wondered what other secrets Annabelle was holding back from him.

It was a good thing that he had already decided to forgive Annabelle and after a stern lecture take her back. Of course, he planned to put her on probation. Now, he had to find a way to use the book club to his advantage.



Chapter Nine Analysis

Phillips illustrates one of Heath's flaws in Chapter Nine. He treats Annabelle as he would an employee or a competitor who has tried to embarrass him in business. He has allowed Annabelle to snipe at him without any consequences. His business with Phoebe is too important to him for him to allow her to see him out of his element. While he might be furious, he is in control. He is able to be more than civil to the party goers and the Calebow family. He steps in and does things that are asked of him. He could have acted like a diva about it. He doesn't pout or act moody. The reader sees the Python side of him as well as his ability to roll with the punches.

When Phillips writes the phone scenes with Pippi and Heath, the reader sees how far he will go to keep his clients happy. Pippi has him over the barrel because he is afraid that he will make the little female creature cry. He knows that Kevin and Molly are always very concerned about their children. Even though Bodie tells him to just ask Kevin for his phone, Heath doesn't really know much about happy childhoods with good parents.

Heath gets more relaxed as the day goes on and he sees the other adults interacting with the kids. As he relaxes he doesn't feel so threatened by possible wrong moves, he turns himself around about firing Annabelle. Heath goes from never forget and never forgive to forgiving and putting Annabelle on probation. As soon as he leaves the party, he will talk to her.

Heath sees that things have not changed one bit between Phoebe and him. He knows he has to find another way. Phillips gives him another opportunity. He overhears the ladies talking about a book club retreat. He hears some NFL names that make his ears twitch. Phillips once again shows us that Heath has already taking possession of Annabelle. Why shouldn't she have "secrets" from him? She is just his matchmaker. She doesn't have to tell him everything she does. However, Heath has seen her as a partner throughout the afternoon. He doesn't even realize it.



Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten Summary

Chapter Ten begins as Heath announces that Annabelle will need a cottage at Wind Lake Campground. Annabelle stares at him. She sees the little pulse beating at his neck as he challenges her to tell the women that she had been fired. He wishes she had known that she was rehired. He goes on to claim that Annabelle has made a bet that he can't go the weekend without taking a phone call. Annabelle would like to deny Heath this opportunity but she knows she would be sabotaging herself. Later on the way back to the city, Annabelle says what she wanted to say in front of the women. Heath tells her that he had already decided to rehire her. He tells her that he will honor the contract whether he goes or not to Wind Lake Campground. Annabelle says that she can imagine how cooperative he would be if he didn't go. She demands that he look her in the eye and tell the truth. She doesn't believe that he had decided to hire her back.

It's a few days before Heath calls. He has a meeting set with one of Powers' candidates and wants Annabelle to set up a meeting with one of her ladies. On the day of the meeting, Annabelle takes some time before Heath's meeting to meet with one of her clients. The man wants to meet someone else because this woman was a little heavier than he wanted. He obviously had a dream swimsuit model in mind. Considering he was sporting a comb over and a little paunch himself, his fantasy was probably never going to come true. Annabelle asked enough questions to make him think and then she helped his competitive spirit to come into play. Annabelle suggests that the date had doubts about him. Before they end the conversation, the client is going to get a haircut and call the woman for another date.

Annabelle goes to the meeting with Heath and finds that her candidate can't make it. She has had an accident. As she waits, Heath calls and he is stuck on the runway and doesn't know when he will get back to town. Annabelle waits and the most beautiful woman Annabelle has ever seen walks in. The next morning Annabelle comes back from a run to find Portia Powers on her porch. Portia is ready to kill Annabelle. It seems the woman who was to meet Heath was Claudia Reeshman, a top model in Chicago. Annabelle had gotten Claudia out of the bar without waiting on Heath because Claudia was a total, emotional wreck. Annabelle figured that Claudia hadn't made it in New York because she was too far from her dealer. When Annabelle tells Portia that she had sent a bad candidate, Portia tells her that Heath only wants beauty and bra size. When Annabelle suggests working together, Portia tells her that she wouldn't have Annabelle working for her. Annabelle asks her to leave and tells her to take her grievances to Heath.

Heath did call a few hours later and sounded less than happy. Annabelle stood her ground and asked if he was firing her again. She asked if he trusted her. There was a pregnant silence. Heath broke it with his admission of trust for her. He did request that if they ran across a woman who had modeled for SI's cover that he at least get to know



who it was. He went on to remind her about the favor he had asked for the next day. She was going to take Sean Palmer's mother around Chicago.

Annabelle and Arte Palmer toured Chicago the next day. Bodie drove them and had tickets for the places they wanted to see. They were at Millennium Park and ran into Dean Robillard there. After some flirting, Dean asked Annabelle to go to Oak Street Beach the next day. It seems that his fans will leave him alone if he has a woman with him. He and Annabelle have teased each other enough that Dean tells her he can relax because he won't be going to bed with her. The next day, Dean was as good as his word. They had a good time at the beach. Annabelle wasn't home long before there was someone at her door. Heath was there.

Chapter Ten Analysis

In Chapter Ten Phillips has Heath make a move to invite himself to a retreat with the Stars book club. Since he hasn't already re-hired Annabelle, it looks as if he is simply using her. While he claims that he had planned to re-hire her before he heard about the book club, she can't believe him. Since Heath has been telling her to do whatever she has to in order to please a client, she is sure that Heath is acting the part of the Python and forcing her to go along with his plan or lose her matchmaking business. This is another conflict for the lovers to solve.

Annabelle does decide that she has been acting personally to Heath, and she needs to remember this is all business. She talks to herself about her sexual fantasies starring Heath. She must stop that. Phillips keeps the sexual tension before the reader. Phillips makes the reader ask if the two characters will ever get it right. Will they eventually admit their love?

Phillips is a master of understatement. There is usually humor in his statements. When Portia is waiting to jump Annabelle about the model, Phillips says that Annabelle was returning from her semiannual morning run. It is much more clever than a simple sentence, Annabelle seldom exercises. This meeting with Portia brings out another characteristic of the relationship between Annabelle and Heath. Heath actually has to think about his trust of Annabelle. Since the reader has been told that Heath wants a woman who sticks, this is a step on the way of a permanent relationship with Annabelle. Heath admits he trusts her.

Phillips introduces the other man when Annabelle goes touring Chicago with Arte Palmer. Because Bodie is with them, Dean Robillards stops to talk. Annabelle finds him amusing rather than God's gift to women. Dean and Annabelle hit it off and a friendship is going to grow. Since Dean is a prospective client for Heath, it is a touchy situation. Annabelle's life has certainly gotten more exciting since she met Heath.



Chapter Eleven

Chapter Eleven Summary

Chapter Eleven opens the door to Heath. He wants to learn what Annabelle was doing with Dean. Of course, he wants to know what Dean said about him. Next he wants to know what Annabelle said about him. Since neither of them had eaten, Heath ordered a pizza. When he asked what she liked on it, she answered hot and spicy. When he looked her up and down she headed for her room to dress. When she returned, dressed, Heath was making himself at home at her desk. She noticed he looked more natural in her chair than she did. Annabelle kept reminding her that this was business. They had a friendly interval. She did have news for Heath. Claudia Reeshman had called and wanted to meet him. Heath said no. Annabelle was surprised. Heath told her that she said Claudia was wrong for him so why waste his time. Heath did warn Annabelle away from Dean the heartbreaker.

Portia is home alone while Chicago sets off fireworks for the Fourth of July. Her reception area calls to say that Bodie is in the lobby. She says to send him up. When he arrives, neither says a word. Bodie goes to the wet bar in the room. They then go to her balcony. No word was spoken as Bodie stood behind her and arranged her so he could run his hands all over her. As they continued, they have a very erotic scene on that balcony. Once they were finished, Bodie went toward the door. Still not a word until he opened the door and said, "Are we clear now?"

Chapter Eleven Analysis

Chapter Eleven contains love scenes with our major characters and our secondary characters. Heath and Annabelle are dancing around each other. Their words are their loving method. They are carefully circling and neither admitting that there might ever be something between them. With a little competition, Heath has come running to protect his matchmaker from the charismatic quarterback. He is full of warnings for Annabelle because he doesn't want her hurt. He disguises his feelings in questions about what Dean has said about him. Heath indicates to Annabelle that she is being used to get to him. Heath leaves after offering to take care of Annabelle's needs if she only wants fun as she has suggested. He knows as does the reader that it has gone as far as it can go without something physical happening.

Portia and Bodie cut out the foreplay to go right to the physical. Heath and Annabelle do a lot of talking. Portia and Bodie do absolutely no talking. From our other clues throughout the book, we know that Portia and Bodie each go after what they want. Portia isn't capable of admitting she wants Bodie. She believes in keeping up appearances, and Bodie doesn't fit her picture of whom she should have as a mate. However, she wants Bodie, or he would never be in her apartment. She would never allow him to dominate as she has. Bodie is a man of few words who goes after what he



wants. He is more in touch with himself and ready to step up. Portia has allowed him to get closer to her than anyone ever has. She just can't put it into words. Bodie is too smart to make her at this point. Portia can't give in yet. She stamps to the door and opens it for Bodie. She agreed to the sex but can't handle the feelings.



Chapter Twelve

Chapter Twelve Summary

Chapter Twelve begins as Annabelle and Heath travel to the retreat. Annabelle has never traveled in a private jet before. One of Heath's connections had loaned him the pilot and the plane for the trip to northern Michigan. Once they arrived at the nearest airport, they rented a car to drive the rest of the way. Annabelle drives as Heath finishes his last phone calls before the no phones bet starts. Once he is free of his phone, he plays with all the knobs and buttons on the dash. He also proves that he makes an excellent backseat driver. Annabelle threatens to stop the car if he doesn't stop.

As they arrived at Wind Lake Campground, Heath admitted that he could understand why Kevin had held onto this money pit. The land around the camp was gorgeous. The big bed and breakfast looked inviting. There was a court in the front with basketball courts and painted cottages all around the court and beyond. The cottages were pastel colors and painted to look like the homes of the animals in the books that Molly wrote and published. Each was named things like Green Pastures, Milk and Honey, Lamb of God, and Jacob's Ladder. As Annabelle came to the end of the lane that Molly had drawn on the map, Annabelle saw Lilies of the Fields. She fell in love with the cottage immediately.

It was a two bedroom cottage with a screened in back porch. Annabelle didn't let Heath get away with trying to take the big bed. Heath gave in easily for him. He said he would drag a mattress out to the porch. He would enjoy sleeping outside. When Heath asked about who would be attending the retreat, he learned that a couple of retired players and wives would be there with Star management. Heath still had hopes of making friends with Phoebe. As Heath went to his room, Annabelle read a note that Molly had left for her. They were to meet for a barbeque at six. Annabelle didn't read the P.S. aloud. It said not to do anything stupid.

Heath was happy to learn that children were not attending until he found out that Kevin's and Molly's Danny and Pippi would be there. When Annabelle asked why he didn't like Pippi, he changed the subject and didn't tell her about Pippi's ability to trick a phone away from him.

With more time together, their conversation grew more intimate. As Heath asked Annabelle if she was going to undermine him with his Phoebe plan, she didn't allow herself to answer him with a wise crack. However, when he brought up Rob, she had trouble even thinking of talking about that.

Once the eating was over at the cookout, Annabelle wanders down to the dock. It isn't long before Molly joins her. Molly is definitely suspicious. As Annabelle claims that everything between Heath and herself is business, Molly tells her that she will never forgive her if she falls in love with Heath. The other women join them. Annabelle tells



them about introducing Gwen to Heath and asks that they not mention her. She and Ian hadn't been able to attend this retreat. They were part of the book club. Phoebe found Annabelle's trick very funny. The other women assured her that they would keep their mouths shut and one even offered to pray for Annabelle.

As the women turn to head back to the party, they all catch their breaths. One of them said they were in the Garden of the Gods. Five of the six men are very big men. They are all built and good looking. The smallest man in the group could pass for Tom Cruise if he was wearing sun glasses. They were truly awe inspiring when standing together in a group.

When it is noted that Heath fits right in, Phoebe takes a shot at him. She says that shape-shifters can fit in anywhere. Annabelle defends Heath and raises more eyebrows. The women join the men and they dance until they part a couple at a time to go to bed. When Annabelle reaches the cottage, she tells Heath that she is not responsible. She is drunk and she would jump anyone. Heath sees an easy conquest. However, before they go too far, Annabelle pushes away and says that she isn't drunk.

Chapter Twelve Analysis

Chapter Twelve focuses on Heath and Annabelle. Annabelle is more determined than ever that she will be professional; however, she finds herself acting like a dieter on the night before the diet. No, nothing personal. Phillips has Heath and Annabelle talking about Heath's plans to convince Phoebe that he isn't the rat she thinks he is as he stands in Annabelle's bedroom. Annabelle's suitcase is open and her panties are in plain sight. Heath never looks down at them and never mentions them until he is walking out of her room. Heath comments—"Nice panties."

Heath is not acting like an employer in this chapter. He is a man relaxing with a group of people that he enjoys. The only time that Annabelle is truly tempted to wisecrack happens as Heath asks her if she is going to undermine him with Phoebe. Her inner dialogue makes the wisecrack but she is wise enough to only suggest he talk to Phoebe about the problem and try to resolve it.

Phillips does introduce others to Annabelle's trick in order to get Heath's business. The reader apparently needs a little reminder of that first scene. Gwen isn't at the retreat but she is part of the group. Annabelle knows she will have to tell Heath but she doesn't plan to do so until later. Phillips has shown Phoebe and Heath together, sniping at each other. During this chapter, Phoebe makes nasty comments about Heath. It isn't just talking trash but real dislike. Heath can do nothing right.

This chapter does contain some girl talk between Molly and Annabelle. It is getting more and more apparent to others that Annabelle is falling for Heath. It gets more obvious as the evening turns into a dancing time for the couples. Phillips has been teasing the reader with the suggestion that these two are going to get together. The scene of the chapter makes the reader think that their time to come together is now. Annabelle

almost talks herself into it. Heath is ready to put aside his "training" for marriage and have a fling. Annabelle is telling Heath that she is too drunk to know what she is doing. The excuses don't work. Annabelle steps back from Heath at the last moment.



Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Thirteen Summary

In Chapter Thirteen Annabelle wants to get away from Heath and hide under the covers. Heath won't let her walk away from him. He insists they take a walk. On the walk, Heath points out that they are both single and adults who got a little drunk and a little hot and wanted something more. There was nothing wrong with that. Heath was doing an excellent sales job. Annabelle was agreeing until she almost was in his arms again. Annabelle snaps to the sales pitch before they go too far. She tells Heath that she has now seen the Python at work. She doesn't like it. She doesn't want to be the lover by default.

Annabelle points out to Heath that he doesn't sleep with his clients. He points out that his clients are male. Annabelle uses the example of if he had a figure skater who had won an Olympic medal and had all kinds of offers for endorsements, he wouldn't sleep with her. Heath had to agree. After Annabelle made her point, Heath was left to pull out the mattress to the screened porch for the night. He had to admit to himself that he was having a good time and wanted to sleep with Annabelle.

The next day Heath has a golf date with the guys. They play their round of golf and then go to the clubhouse for lunch. They are supposed to discuss the book for their part of the book club, but only Heath seems to have read the book. After the others make nothing conversation about the book, they go back to discussing football. The women have chosen different books. Each has chosen a biography of a woman she admires. They have a better time of it than the guys, They each do a collage of what they envision for themselves. Annabelle is careful but still has a good looking man on her collage that the others claim looks like Heath. She assures them that it is just the right type of man to be a client for her Perfect for You matchmaking operation.

During the afternoon, everyone seems to end up at the beach. Heath was happy to read the paper until he saw a little cutie heading for him. Heath tries to ignore her but she won't be ignored. Pippi keeps calling him Twinz. He tells her that he doesn't have a phone. Pippi has just begun to rub her stomach and saying she has a baby inside when Annabelle appears. Heath sees her as the cavalry coming to his rescue. Annabelle realizes the Pippi is calling him Prince, a left over from the party. Pippi decides she wants her daddy to take her into the water, Heath and Annabelle end up in the water, playing some water tag and just horsing around,

Annabelle tires of swimming and goes to the cottage. Heath is left on the beach. He sees Phoebe sitting alone, He goes over and sits down on a towel on the sand. He once again apologizes to Phoebe and tells her that he was just a kid. He has grown up and hasn't tried to screw her for years, She agrees but says that she doesn't like what is happening with Annabelle. She believes that Annabelle's family is so focused on Annabelle's making six figures that Annabelle doesn't feel as if she is good enough.



Heath is a distraction. Phoebe doesn't like it. Heath tries to keep his temper but finally he basically tells Phoebe to go to hell. While he claims he isn't hurting Annabelle, and he won't because they are friends, there is just a bit of guilty conscience.

The group went into town for the evening meal. As they were sitting around the table, the ladies asked about the book the guys were supposed to have read. In order to change the subject, Kevin asked Annabelle about her date with Dean Robillards. All the women had something to say about that. When Kevin told them that he heard about it in the locker room and that Dean said he had had a good time, the women were more excited. Heath didn't look happy. Phoebe was watching Heath's reaction to the teasing of Annabelle about Dean. One of the women said she was glad that Annabelle was coming out of her shell. Heath's eyebrows lifted as he asked if she had been in a shell. This question brought up her unfortunate engagement. The guys couldn't get over Rob turning into Rosemary. Kevin went on to say that he thought Rob had treated Annabelle badly when he knew he might change his sex and asked Annabelle to marry him anyway.

Once the group returned to the campground, the women went to a big room in the B&B. The surprise was an erotic film to help women get in touch with their sexuality. It was fine for the married women but there were two ladies in the crowd with no men. The ladies were all turned on by the time the film was over.

Chapter Thirteen Analysis

Phillips , in chapter thirteen, places Heath in the spotlight. Heath drags Annabelle out the door for a walk. The reader sees a salesman in action. When a real salesperson moves into the sales mode, they simply don't stop. Good sales people move into cruise control and sail over objections until they make their sale. Heath is definitely a good salesperson. He almost has Annabelle back into bed again. She wakes up right in time.

Annabelle's intelligence is emphasized. Annabelle knows she has seen the python at work. She spots it and although she almost fell for it, she was able to stop in time. She is good at explaining her position and keeping herself focused for what she wants. If she gets a bit sidetracked, she picks herself up and comes back strong. She is able to do what needs done in order to succeed.

Heath's ability to fit in with his peers is clear as the men go golfing. He is a team player and a good sport. He has actually read the book for the club and has some intelligent comments. He saves the day since the other men obviously are more interested in a retreat with the women and are men who know their football.

Phillips continues to show Heath's weaknesses. He is afraid of Pippi. He doesn't want the little girl to be upset or to cry. He reminds the reader of Tom Hanks in *A League of Their Own* when he says, "There ain't no crying in baseball." When Pippi appears and calls him Prince, Heath's fear goes up. Just what he needs is for Pippi to decide that she wants to hang around Heath. He has no chance of keeping a phone. While the little



girl scares him, Annabelle, a big girl, looks like the cavalry to him. Heath and Annabelle are compatible as playmates. They have fun in the water. Annabelle fits into the sporting world.

Heath does see his chance to talk to Phoebe. He takes it and does the things a salesman does to make his sale. He sits on the sand and gives her the higher position. He finally talks to her honestly. Phoebe has her questions about Heath. He is still using tricky means to meet with her. Phoebe feels that he is taking Annabelle away from her new business. He is taking up too much of her time. Heath gets angry because of her accusation and walks away. A part of him tries to convince himself that he would never hurt Annabelle.

Everyone in the book club learns about Annabelle's afternoon with Dean Robillard. Kevin Tucker throws the date out for all the women to hear about. After the women twitter and Annabelle even asks what Dean had said in the locker room, Kevin changes the subject to Annabelle's ex-fiancé. This opens up Annabelle's former sex life to everyone. Phillips points out that Heath isn't pleased about any attention Annabelle shows anyone. Phoebe notices Heath's interest.

Finally Phillips sets the reader up for another sex scene. The ladies break off from the guys to watch a movie that is especially about women's erotica. Annabelle is set up for a romantic night with someone.



Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fourteen Summary

Chapter Fourteen finally is the chapter with the sex between Heath and Annabelle. After Annabelle has seen the erotica with the women, her desire for Heath is full-blown. When she arrives back at the cottage, Heath is waiting up for her. She doesn't turn her back on him as she tries to inch around him and go to her room. He is determined to find out what happened and why Annabelle is acting strangely. They banter back and forth, and Annabelle gets more agitated. In her acting as if nothing is strange, she goes to the refrigerator and grabs a cold drink. It is only when Heath points it out that she sees she has a jar of mustard. They keep up their bantering and finally they agree to slip into bed together. Even as they get in bed, they banter. Heath and Annabelle certainly have their own senses of humor. Each can take the teasing even in bed.

Later after they have had their night of lovemaking, Annabelle slips back to her bed. She knows she has ruined her business by sleeping with the client. On one level she is glad she had the chance and on the other hand she is hurting. However, she bounces into the bedroom the next morning and uses her acting classes to make Heath believe that she used him. She hadn't had sex since her breakup with Rob. She needed someone with whom she wasn't emotionally involved. She kind of wanted to have sex with Dean Robillard but was afraid she wouldn't be able to perform. She made Heath believe that she had used him for a warm up for Dean.

Chapter Fourteen Analysis

Phillips brings the reader to a climactic moment in Chapter Fourteen. Annabelle's feelings for Heath are running high. She is to a point of allowing her body to take over and go after what it wants. Annabelle wants Heath. She notices everything about him. It doesn't help that he is stretched out on a couch wearing only a pair of gym shorts. The light shining down on him makes him a golden boy with perfect features. His six pack is tight and right there for Annabelle to see. She continues to struggle with her own wishes. She makes smart remarks and tries to inch away from him. All of her ways of stalling him end in defeat. None of her protective smart remarks are met with answers from him. She can't make him mad. He just keeps coming. Heath is geared to go after what he wants and Annabelle is the goal in sight.

Just as they head for the bed, Heath tells her that it has been a long time and it won't be good for her. He plans an initial moment and then he plans to make it good for her. They are straightforward as they go for what they both want.

Afterwards, both of them become aware that they have made a mistake. Heath realizes that his goal oriented personality has overcome the character he is trying to build. He

feels like his father. He tries to think of ways to help Annabelle with her business. He doesn't consider not having Annabelle around any longer.

Phillips has Annabelle show up with a plan that takes all her acting ability. Annabelle knows it will kill her when Heath finds a woman to marry but she has to hang on and keep that stiff upper lip and build her business. She uses all her acting ability to convince Heath that she has used him. Her plan is plausible. It helps her hang onto her pride with Heath. It helps Heath to continue to use her services.

Phillips has the reader cheering for Heath and Annabelle to get together. The reader knows that Annabelle is exactly what he needs but he is still hung up on fantasy woman. He isn't going to let go. Phillips has the reader asking if he is going to ruin his life with these ideas that formed when he was a kid.



Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Fifteen Summary

Chapter Fifteen is a very short chapter. Gwen shows up at the book club retreat and Heath sees the pregnant woman and meets her husband. The book club tries to rescue her but Heath walks her away from the group for a talk.

Heath has trouble accepting that Annabelle pulled a bait and switch scam on him. He seemed to admire her trick to get his business but he does lecture her on never doing it again. He believes in being ethical and if one moves to the dark side, it is easy to continue in that vein.

The ladies sent Kevin to be sure Annabelle is okay. The ladies seem to think that the Python might do something drastic to her. They want Kevin to break up the meeting.

Chapter Fifteen Analysis

Phillips in Chapter Fifteen takes care of a loose end that needs to be tied up tight. This is a perfect place to allow Heath to learn about Gwen. Heath is interested enough in Annabelle for the reader to know that he won't fire her. The whole group of Annabelle's friends can see that she is capable of working with Heath. She is as smart as he is. If Phillips doesn't introduce Gwen to Heath at some point, she will have to add a chapter at the end to explain everything. Some writers let that happen and the book becomes weaker as the explanations go on and on.

The reader can see that Heath is proud of Annabelle for her fast thinking and being able to pull the plan together. He leaves the group to go back to work without firing Annabelle.



Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Sixteen Summary

Chapter Sixteen is another very short chapter. Portia is worried about her business. Heath is with Annabelle for a weekend and Portia can't stand it. Why had he gone off with her? Portia is still dressed in church clothes. She started attending church for business reasons but found that she discovered some bit of peace for her inner being at the church. Back at the office she couldn't stop thinking about Heath and Annabelle. While she tried to keep her mind on finding a match for Heath, she couldn't keep her mind away from the evening with Bodie. She kept telling herself that she had allowed herself to be degraded by him. However, she couldn't stop her admission to herself that she had wanted to be taken. She had felt like he had treated her tenderly. She picked up the phone to call him but didn't let the phone ring.

She was going through databases to hunt a woman for Heath when someone knocked on the door. It was Bodie. He had seen her number on caller I.D. Once he was inside and they said a few words, Bodie pulled the blinds. He turned around and told her to take her clothes off.

Chapter Sixteen Analysis

Phillips answers the reader's question about Portia. What had she been doing while Annabelle was away with Heath? Phillips reminds us of Portia's desperation and her attempt to appear confident and successful. Portia is very unhappy and is afraid her world is falling apart. She can't understand why she accepted Bodie's attention. Why hadn't she called the cops? Why had she stood there and let him use her body? Why didn't it feel like he had used her? Why did she feel he had cared?

After the scene on the terrace, Bodie needs some redemption. The reader may have been surprised that Bodie treated her that way. We haven't realized that Bodie was interested in Portia. Bodie had seemed to be playing with Portia. Portia wanted to keep Heath as a client and Bodie could ruin that for Portia. The reader may not have liked Portia but the reader would not like Bodie's action without some more explained about that action. The reader needed to know Portia's reaction to Bodie.



Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Seventeen Summary

Annabelle has to go to Heath in Chapter Seventeen. He wasn't returning her calls and hadn't called her since the weekend at Wind Lake Camp. Annabelle arrived on his doorstep early in the morning. He tried to push her away but she refused to leave. Once he was dressed and Annabelle tried to make him promise not to mention her little crush on Dean to anyone, she moved on to introductions. She arranged introductions for a solid week with her candidates. Portia heard about it and sent some others along. Heath didn't hit it off with any of them. Finally, one that Portia had sent hit it off with Heath. Heath thought she was a good one and decided to call her for a date. Annabelle told him that they were too much alike and that it wouldn't work but Heath went ahead with his plan.

Chapter Seventeen Analysis

Annabelle must be aggressive for her business's sake in Chapter Seventeen. Her brother had called to lecture her for being a screw up. She had to make the business work. Her brother, Doug, first bragged about his financial well-being. He then attacked Annabelle by telling her that her mother was stressed out because of her. He supposed her mother wanted to sell the house. Phillips gives the reader a good view of Annabelle's family. The reader also sees that the real support that Annabelle has had emotionally came from her grandmother. Annabelle is hurt at the thought of her grandmother's house going to developers. Annabelle has to confront Heath in order to get business going again.

Phillips has Annabelle do a difficult thing when she introduces Heath to other women and then sits there and watches them talk and laugh together. The women were in the running to become Heath's wife. She didn't have a chance.

Heath does have a bad moment when Annabelle goes to the beach with Dean again. He wants to court Dean to come to his agency so he doesn't want to irritate Dean. However, he doesn't want Annabelle to be with Dean. He is rather a dog in the manger about this and trying to tell himself that he only wants to save Annabelle from a bad mistake.

As the chapter ends, Heath believes he has found the right woman. It is true that she is very successful and on her way to the top in TV news. Heath can't see that he is looking at himself and that if they are together, no one will be nourished. Annabelle tries to tell him but this time he doesn't take her advice.



Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Eighteen Summary

In Chapter Eighteen, Annabelle does not fall into a blue funk because Heath may have found a woman to date and possibly marry. Annabelle plans a wine and cheese party for her new clients and some of the others that she has met. Her website has picked up a few people as well. The party does well and even her friend Janine who came to help may have found a new interest in the group. Mr. Bronicki makes a good butler for the party.

Heath and Keri had made a few headlines during the previous three weeks. Annabelle was reading late one evening when her doorbell rang. She found Heath on her doorstep. He was completely worn out from flying around the country and meeting with his clients as football practice was ready to start. He was hungry and didn't want to go home to an empty house. While he was eating, he told her that he had given up on Keri. They had even had to break up with email because of their inability to schedule anything. Heath admits Annabelle was correct about Heath and Keri being too much alike. He did tell Annabelle that they hadn't even slept together. Annabelle's mood lightened after hearing about the split.

Heath asked Annabelle about Lover Boy and she had to think to remember her crush on Dean. She informs Heath that she is giving Dean lots of space. Heath tells her that he had seen Dean at WaterWorks and that he was definitely feeling free.

Heath surprises her by asking if he can crash at her house. He is practically asleep on his feet. He looks around at the old house. He even insists on seeing the third floor room where Annabelle sleeps. While Annabelle goes to gather some linens, Heath stretches out on her bed and falls asleep. Annabelle would have just left him, except she sees her pink bra strap coming out from under him. His hand is near the strap. She has flashbacks of Rob and can't leave her clothing near Heath. She tugs on the strap but can't get it free. She tries to move Heath and he finally wakes up. They discuss the bra and Annabelle's feelings about it. He finally leaves her bedroom to go to another but he takes a sex toy magazine with her. Annabelle wishes she had thrown it out.

Heath told himself he shouldn't be at Annabelle's as he went to the other bedroom. He knew he shouldn't just show up and have fun with her. He told himself that he had to end this dating cycle. He needed to get this ended.

Portia was attending a charity function with many of the important folk in Chicago. She had been wandering around thinking about her agency and fearing that things were on a downward cycle. She forced herself to meet and greet a few of the older society dames. As she was trying to get the attention of Colleen Corbett, the room went silent. Portia looked across the room and saw Bodie coming across the floor. He was dressed well and fit right in except for the tattoos and shaved head. As he approached Colleen



Corbett, Portia wanted to crawl under a table. He laid his hand on Colleen's shoulder, and it soon was apparent that Bodie was her nephew.

Portia was so angry that Bodie had let her believe that he was just a hunk of meat for her to use, she left the party and began walking. Bodie chased her down and told her that at first it amused him to tease her. He knew that he became her dirty little secret. He knew they couldn't have a relationship based on his name and family connections. He wanted to find her real self and have her admit her real feelings. He tried to talk to her about that but she slammed him right out of her life.

Bodie got home to find Heath in his TV room with a game on. They started talking about Portia and Annabelle until they realized that they were sharing feelings. They shut down and watched the game.

Chapter Eighteen Analysis

While it appeared that Heath had found a match, Annabelle doesn't allow herself to fall into a depressed state. Phillips keeps illustrating that Annabelle maybe not be the Top 10 in the success mode of her family and others. However, she has determination as well as the ability to deal with people and her own obstacles. She doesn't back down but meets things head on. If she loses, she is the kind of person to pick herself up and go on with her life.

Phillips moves the action forward by three weeks in just a couple of paragraphs. She brings Heath and Annabelle back into the reader's focus again as Heath shows up at Annabelle's doorstep. He announces the end of the attempted romance with the other woman. Heath and Annabelle are comfortable with each other. Annabelle feeds him leftover spaghetti with a little fast food leftover hamburger thrown in. They tease each other and are able to laugh at themselves. This is another scene of the two characters getting to know each other better. Phillips also reminds the reader of Annabelle's last romance and gives Heath an opportunity to see her vulnerable. It does hurt Annabelle to see a man she is interested in anywhere near women's lingerie. As Heath leaves Annabelle's room to go to the guest room, he picks up a catalog that the reader will see again later. Phillips is clever with her plants.

While Heath and Annabelle are getting to know more about each other, Portia and Bodie are blowing up a relationship. Portia had no idea that Bodie wasn't just a sexual toy. Bodie as trailer park trash was a dirty little secret. Portia is humiliated and furious when she learns he is related to old money and society matrons. Bodie confronts her about her keeping him a secret because of the look of things and what people will think. He tells her the truth about himself and his rehab when his football career ended and Heath came into his life. Portia can't admit her problem and is furious that he sees through her. Phillips is an excellent story teller as she allows Bodie to tell his own story so that the reader can give Portia a bit of sympathy. Bodie is the catalyst to make her more human. A more hurting human being. Portia refuses to consider Bodie's analysis and turns her back on him. She is running.



Phillips concludes the chapter with Bodie and Heath at Bodie's house. Both say a little about the women that they have in their lives. They realize that they are talking like "girls" and shut up and go back to football on the TV. Phillips suggests that men aren't quite from Mars after all. The men have football to run to when they don't want to figure things out any more.



Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Nineteen Summary

In Chapter Nineteen, Heath decides he has to get the wife hunt completed. He calls both women into his office and promises them one more meeting and if neither comes up with the right woman, it is over. Portia tries to work with Heath in her well-practiced, the client is always right, speech. Annabelle is defensive. Portia is surprised to see Heath's interaction with Annabelle. However, Portia isn't on her game. Annabelle notices that Portia's shoes do not match. Portia is scared that she will be fired. Annabelle basically expects it. She asks Heath if he is not taking any responsibility for the failure. As they leave the office, Annabelle scurries to the elevator but Portia stops by Bodie's office. She tells him that it is over. Bodie asks her not to give up but to fight for them. Portia goes back to her office to find her assistants resigning from the office. They are going to Denver and opening up their own matchmaking office. Portia is left with no one in office to assist her in gathering clients.

Annabelle goes to her car and heads home. She knows she finally has to introduce Heath to Delaney Lightfield. Annabelle had met her at camp when she was younger, and they had been best friends for a number of years. They were still acquaintance friends. Delaney was fun to be around, athletic, and smart. She had the class that Heath was wanting. She was really perfect for him. Annabelle made the call. She was right. They hit it off immediately.

When football started and Delaney was attending football games with Heath, he watched her move through the people that he needed to have as contacts. She fit in exactly. He didn't have to worry about what she would say. She always said the right thing. She did like opera more than country music and sometimes Heath wondered if there was still too much trailer park on him; however, they got on well. At one game, Heath finally got one of the things he wanted most. Phoebe Calebow called to him and said that perhaps she had been wrong about him and his messing with Annabelle's business.

After that date, Heath was so happy that he decided to go by Annabelle's house. It never occurred to him that she might have someone with her. When he arrived, she didn't open the door for him. She stood in it. They agreed that it was good that he had found Delaney. As he backed away from her house, he noticed the red car parked across the street. He didn't like it that Dean was there.

Portia was so depressed and not sleeping at all, she went out for sleeping pills. She threw a coat over sweat pants and headed for the drugstore. She never went out without make-up but this time she did. When she got to the store, she looked at all the pills. She noticed the seventy-five percent off some yellow marshmallow chickens. Some memories from childhood popped up. She forgot the sleeping pills and picked up a couple of handfuls of the chicks. When the counter boy asked if she wanted so many,



she told him it was for a kindergarten class. She desperately wanted to get out of the store before she broke down completely. She took her seven boxes home. She opened them all and set them on the table before her. Six chicks to a box. Seven boxes. She began to eat them one at a time as she admitted to herself that Bodie was right about her.

Chapter Nineteen Analysis

Heath does want to do the right thing by Annabelle and her business. He knows that he can't keep her with him when he meets other women. He wants to be fair to her. Phillips has shown us Heath at his determined plan to make a good life in every area of his life. Heath is a goal setter. He generally succeeds in meeting those goals he sets. Because he is so determined to have the "right" wife and has his own list of requirements, he can't allow himself to face his own feelings. If he finds the right woman and gets the search over, he can forget Annabelle or so he thinks.

Heath and Portia are two of a kind in this chapter. Heath wants to get himself married and not have to really deal with love. Portia sees Bodie after her meeting with Annabelle and Heath and tells him that it is over. She won't be seeing him any more at all. Annabelle and Bodie belong in the same spot. Annabelle can admit to herself that she really wants Heath but Heath is not ever going to want her. Bodie can be more openly truthful with his feelings for Portia. He asks her to not cut their relationship off.

Annabelle faces that she never had a chance with Heath. She calls the friend who will fit him perfectly according to his own requirements. Annabelle is more generous than most people. She is willing to offer Heath to another woman. She is giving up her chance at ever being with him. Phillips shows Bodie and Annabelle as the most normal of the characters in the book. Annabelle may have trouble with her family and their irritating her; however, she goes ahead with who she is and doesn't knuckle under to them or to Heath. Bodie has faced many of his demons and is comfortable with his life after football. Both of them speak truth to their loves and see them as human beings instead of king or queen of a hill.

Phillips makes sure that the reader sees that Heath might try to ignore Annabelle as a possible wife but he can't forget her. He compares her to Delaney and Delaney is exactly what he wants. He doesn't have to worry about her saying the wrong thing. She knows the right people. She even allows him to grow a little closer to Phoebe Calebow. What could be better? However, Annabelle can sing every word of "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere." Delaney is going to help him learn to enjoy opera. Heath sometimes wonders if the trailer park is showing with Delaney. Everyone of Heath's friends think he and Delaney are right for each other. Bodie doesn't agree. Bodie points out that Heath doesn't relax around Delaney. The harder Heath tries to be in the perfect relationship, the more it is apparent to the reader that he is making a mistake. Phillips makes the reader wonder if he is going to make the big mistake.



Phillips has Heath go to Annabelle's after seeing Delaney one night. Annabelle doesn't let him in. As Heath leaves, he notices Dean's car parked across the street. Heath doesn't like it but can't admit that he is jealous. He tries to sell himself on being concerned about Annabelle. Phillips allows the reader to see Annabelle go back to Dean and the card game they had been playing. Everyone knows Annabelle is in love with Heath. Dean offers to call him back over and then make out with her to make Heath jealous.

Phillips gives the reader a good look at Portia. Finally Portia is hitting bottom. She sees Heath with Delaney and knows that she had known Delaney for years but didn't think to introduce Heath to her. She sees her assistants all leave her. She hasn't seen Bodie and has to admit that she misses him. She has failed. When she goes out of her home without her usual bandbox appearance and then loads up on pure sugar—stale sugar at that—the reader knows that she has lost everything that has kept her false face in place.



Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty Summary

Chapter Twenty begins with Heath in rush hour traffic with nothing to do but think. It has been six weeks, and Heath is hoping that he can change Delaney's mind about his house. He wouldn't have cared that Delaney would like a different style until Heath had heard Annabelle's discussion of what she would do with his big house. Delaney wanted everything to be tasteful and calm. When he thought about the future, he couldn't block out his questions about whether Dean Robillards had taken Annabelle to bed. He couldn't block out Annabelle and the difference between her and Delaney. He kept telling himself that he was perfectly matched with Delaney. She was exactly what he had wanted. As he sat in the traffic, he decided it was time for a ring. He couldn't treat Delaney like a football groupie. As he considered the ring, he figured Delaney wouldn't want the big stone he would like to give her. He knew that he didn't know anything about colors and cuts of diamonds. It might not be right to ask Annabelle to pick up the ring. However, he couldn't stop himself. For once, Annabelle answered her phone. She said, "You want me to do what?" before she slammed down the phone.

After the call from Heath, Annabelle had to get out of the house. She went walking and thought about her own last six weeks. Her business was beginning to thrive. She could even think about buying a new car. Instead she was thinking about Heath. Annabelle knew for sure that Delaney was a mistake for Heath. Delaney was too perfect, too polished, too contained.

Heath had been fingering the ring that his secretary had picked out. He hadn't taken it out of his pocket. He had planned a special dinner out and the proposal. He had even practiced the proposal. This was to be the night when he cemented his plans. The phone rang, and Heath decided that it was time for Delaney to discover that he would have to take calls. It was part of his business. It was Annabelle. She demanded that he come to her house. No matter what he was doing. She ordered him to come to her. Heath heard voices in the background. He knew by her tone of voice that he needed to answer the call.

Delaney went with him as they hurried over to Annabelle's. Delaney thought she sounded hysterical; however, Heath knew she sounded pissed. He also knew that if Delaney thought that was hysteria, what would she think when one of Heath's client's teams lost a ballgame. When they arrived, it looked and sounded like a party. Heath spotted several of his clients in Annabelle's house. There were Bears in one room and Stars in another. Heath looked around at the house full of football players with Annabelle in the middle. She smacked one big guy along the side of his head for putting his feet on the coffee table. She yelled at another for placing a bottle on the furniture. The guys were happy to be with her because as they told Heath it was like being home. Annabelle was like their mother. Annabelle was enraged at that suggestion. Heath wanted to know how this meeting had happened. She assured him that it hadn't before



he came into her life. They were teasing and laughing. They had ordered food. Things were going well despite the rivalry between the teams when Dean Robillard walked in. He suggested that Annabelle was having his love child.

As things progressed, Heath realized that Delaney was hovering by the door. He went back to her and took her outside. He ordered her a cab, and while they waited for it, Heath and Delaney realized that Delaney wasn't ready for the reality of Heath's life. She liked the big men best when she was in the skybox far from the field. Once Delaney was in a cab, Heath went back inside and had one of the best evenings that he had had in a long time. He realized after talking to Dean that Annabelle had used Dean as camouflage. Annabelle was in love with him, and he was happy about that. He had plans to make for their future.

Dean and Heath worked together at the end of the evening to clean up and check the sobriety of the players as they left. Annabelle had fallen asleep on the couch. Heath said good night to Dean and watched him leave. Heath went up to Annabelle's room and fell asleep. He didn't awaken until Phoebe called the next morning. She was angry at finding Heath at Annabelle's so early.

Heath went downstairs. He fooled around in the kitchen as Annabelle got up and wondered in. She had only then realized that she had seen Delaney with Heath. As Heath told her that Delaney knew it wasn't going to work, Annabelle assured him that she could work with Delaney. Heath told her that it was over. When Heath showed Annabelle the ring that he had almost put on Delaney's hand, Annabelle scoffed at it. She called it a puny little ring. Exactly what Heath had thought. When Heath told Annabelle that it couldn't be fixed, Annabelle fired him. He told her she couldn't fire a client. She assured him that she could.

Heath left to give them both some time. Heath left with a smile because he knew what he should have realized weeks before, Annabelle Granger was his perfect match.

Chapter Twenty Analysis

Phillips uses the chapter change to move us ahead six weeks. Chapter Twenty starts with Heath forced to sit still and think about those six weeks. The reader discovers that Heath can't stop thinking about Annabelle. The reader learns that Heath hasn't taken Delaney to bed. Instead of thinking of Delaney with pleasure, he is remembering how much fun he had with Annabelle. Heath's thoughts return to Annabelle and Dean. Had Dean taken advantage of Annabelle? He hadn't been in touch with Annabelle for too long. He tried to move toward his goal of marriage to the perfect woman again. He forced Delaney into his mind. He wanted to finish and attain his goal. He needed to go ahead and ask her and quit thinking of Annabelle. However, Phillips wants the reader to know that Heath isn't having an easy time letting Annabelle go. While he knows he shouldn't ask Annabelle to choose the ring, he calls her anyway.



Heath doesn't take the time to get the ring himself. He has a secretary do it. Heath has always wanted the convention of marriage with the "right" woman but doesn't want to take the time to be part of a real family. He wants the family but doesn't know how to get one. It is obvious that his marriage will be for appearances not for love.

Phillips shows Heath and the reader what Heath really needs and wants. When Phillips puts all the football guys, including some of Heath's clients, in Annabelle's house, Heath sees Annabelle can give the guys the kind of nurturing that they seem to need and allow them to have a good time. Heath has a good time. Phillips answers questions for the reader by answering them for Heath. Dean is just another football player. Annabelle treats him like the others. Heath can see himself bringing home a client and Annabelle's ability to go with the flow. Annabelle likes to be distracted just as he does. They both get bored easily. Phillips has developed many likable characters that are a part of Heath's life. She lets them all play in this chapter that gives the reader a fun read as well as a satisfying climax. The reader finally sees that Heath is not going to make a major mistake and marry the wrong woman. He won't be breaking Annabelle's heart when he invites her to his wedding. Heath has finally realized that Annabelle is perfect for him.

Phillips has the reader moving right down the road the reader wants to travel. Happily ever after should be right around the corner. Annabelle's competition is gone. The only disappointment is that Heath didn't kiss her. However, the reader knows that Heath sets goals so he is going to plan the proposal and the honeymoon.



Chapter Twenty-one

Chapter Twenty-one Summary

Chapter Twenty-one starts with Annabelle dressing for her birthday party with her family. A few days have passed since she fired Heath. Annabelle is not looking forward to the party. One of the family parties had been an intervention to force Annabelle into their family mold. She had arranged a date with Dean Robillards. Just as Annabelle was adding the finishing touches, the phone rang, and it was Heath. He teased her about the sex catalogue he had picked up at her house some time before. As he hung up, the doorbell rang. She opened the door to find Heath. It seemed that Dean had been hijacked by Kevin to watch football film with him.

When Heath and Annabelle arrived at the Mayfair Club's private dining room, Annabelle's parents and brothers were instantly charmed by Heath. Heath was just as charmed by them. The teasing that went on between the brothers and Annabelle wasn't missed by Heath. As the evening progressed, Heath saw the family that he had always wanted. Annabelle felt like Heath had moved over to the cool kids' side with her brothers. Her mother tried to convince Heath to hire Annabelle back. It was obvious that Annabelle was the little darling even though she didn't live the life they envisioned for her.

The sister-in-law had a few drinks and began to talk about the Grangers. Since she was a snob, she couldn't understand why the Grangers didn't let people know that they had been one of the original society families of St. Louis. Annabelle's mother let it out that Annabelle had been a debutante. Heath saw just how funny that Annabelle had everything he wanted all along, and he hadn't known it. He got so caught up in the family and his decision that he wanted Annabelle, he got up at the table and asked for Annabelle's hand. His speech made Annabelle uncomfortable. She said no. She also said that she had noticed he left out the L-word. Her brothers jumped in to help Heath but only said stupid things that her brothers always said in their tormenting style. Annabelle didn't believe that Heath had already bought the ring that he had picked out himself. She didn't believe the Northwestern Marching Band. She just knew that Heath hadn't said a word before he found out about her background. She hadn't heard an "I love you" from Heath. She got up and walked out.

Chapter Twenty-one Analysis

In Chapter Twenty-one Phillips surprises the reader as the story of the proposal opens up. First the reader sees that Annabelle still believes that she must forget about Heath. She can congratulate herself because she has accomplished establishing the matchmaker business. She is actually turning a profit. She didn't give up when things got rough with Heath.



When Heath shows up at her door to take her to her birthday dinner with her family, the reader is sure that we are moving toward happily ever after at full speed. The last chapter allowed the reader into Heath's real life. He was placed in a real life position with the men he will have in his life forever. The reader sees him interact with his real family. He understands the team, and he protects his family members and can have fun with them too. He wasn't just working but living his life at the party. Dean and the rest gave him a fun evening.

This chapter belongs to Annabelle. Heath is set down into the middle of her life. Her family wasn't what he expected. He learned more about her that made her even more desirable to him. If he wanted any other proof that she would be a plus in his life, he had it. He wanted to be part of her family. They accepted him.

However, Heath forgets that Annabelle knows him extremely well. She sees him go into his sales mode. He was a charmer and he uses all his charm on the family. It never enters his head that Annabelle can love him and not say yes to his proposal. He is about to get everything he wanted. He doesn't even realize that she wants love in return. He has developed a relationship with some trust with Annabelle but he can't lose total control and give his love.

The family reacts as usual. They only see a charming, successful man who has proposed. They don't understand that Heath isn't giving himself to Annabelle. He is asking for Annabelle to give everything. Annabelle will make him happy. She will fit into his life as he expects her to. The reader watches the happily ever after disappearing.



Chapter Twenty-two

Chapter Twenty-two Summary

Heath followed Annabelle out of the dining room at the beginning of Chapter Twenty-two. Annabelle stands with her back to him at first. Heath tries to make her believe that he had decided to marry her four days before. He has the receipt for the ring he had chosen, which he would fax her. When she tells him that she didn't hear about Love, Heath starts to catalogue the things he loves about her. She points out that Heath had seen her with the men the other night and decided to compromise. He had set a goal for himself and he wanted to be married before his thirty-fifth birthday. She wouldn't be a compromise. Heath still couldn't say he loved her. She went home, packed, and got out of town before her family could descend on her.

Heath went home and locked himself in with scotch. He couldn't admit he was in love. He could only medicate himself with alcohol. He hated being like his father, but he looked at himself and saw his dad. Heath didn't make it to any of the football games on Sunday. He didn't call any of his clients. For the first time ever, Heath put his job on hold and did nothing.

Portia had heard from a waiter at the Mayfair Club that Heath had been refused. She couldn't reach Heath by phone. She was sure that Heath and Annabelle really did love each other. She had gotten a skin peel which had left her face blue for a few days. She didn't want to go out but she knew that her contract with Heath was due to end in two days at midnight. She had to find Heath and handle an introduction to Annabelle. Portia didn't dress up. She left in her sloppy sweatshirt, uncombed hair, and blue face and went to Heath's house.

Heath was in a robe when Portia tapped on his window when he wouldn't answer the door. He let her in and she made him see that he was in love with Annabelle. She insisted that after Heath found Annabelle, he allow her to get them together. She was the professional.

Heath was surprised to learn that Annabelle was missing. He wanted her safely tucked away while he worked out his new ideas in order to marry her. Portia let herself out and Heath heard Bodie's voice at his door.

Chapter Twenty-two Analysis

Chapter Twenty-two allows the reader to see just how alike Portia and Heath are. Both are power houses whose power has been pulled. Phillips allows Heath to fall apart. He has proven that he can walk away from a bad deal without falling apart. He doesn't turn to drink. He has self-discipline and uses it always. However, Annabelle's refusal takes him down.



Portia has already suffered with her loss. It looks as if her business is a failure. She has turned to sugar to ease her feeling of loss and hurt. Phillips does have Portia a step ahead of the process since she is still worried about her appearance enough to get a peel. She will fix her appearance and go again. However, the peel gives her a timeline. She can wallow until her face can be seen again. As it turns out, she has to go out with a blue face. Once the face is gone, she should have Heath and Annabelle together and able to close the Power Agency with a success.

Portia is the one to explain power and control to Heath when it comes to falling in love. Heath finally sees that he really is in love with Annabelle. He had already faced the fact that he had hurt her and he was hurting because it. When Portia told him no one knew where Annabelle was, he couldn't keep the mask up. He wanted to fix Annabelle's hurt, and he wanted to be with her that very minute.



Chapter Twenty-three

Chapter Twenty-three Summary

Portia falls into Bodie's arms in Chapter Twenty-three. After talking with Heath about love and control, Bodie's appearance at Heath's door is a welcome surprise. Portia is ready to admit to loving him and telling him that he was right in his psychoanalysis of her. She wants Bodie to hold her and never let her go. He is more than willing to do that. He takes her to a park across from Heath's house and they talk. Portia even asks Bodie to marry her. She admits her fear of living fully and Bodie assures her that all people are scared.

Monday morning, as soon as he can decently reach people, Heath starts his search for Annabelle. He begins with her family but can't find her. He drives to her house and finds the car he bought her has been delivered. He talks to Mr. Bronicki and learns that no one knows where Annabelle is. He calls Kevin and learns nothing but the Book Club is meeting in the afternoon. Heath talks to Dean but Dean is ready to hire him as agent. Heath doesn't have time for that. He has to find Annabelle. Heath has a little time before the Book Club is due to meet and he goes by Molly's publishing house and talks to the ex-fiancé. Finally he reaches Phoebe's house where the book club is meeting. Phoebe thinks he has come to crow about Dean's hiring him as agent. He tells her that there is more to life than football. Heath asks all the women how to find Annabelle. None of them have any sympathy for him. As he is leaving in defeat, Pippi calls to him from the front porch. Phoebe comes out and talks to her and then goes back inside. Pippi tells Heath that she is supposed to tell him a secret. She scampers down the porch steps to Heath and tells him that Belle is at the campground. The phone rings and it is Dean. Heath hands the phone to Pippi and leaves.

Chapter Twenty-three Analysis

Phillips builds the tension as she allows the reader to share Heath's dark night of his romantic soul. It has taken a great deal of pain that booze doesn't cure to make him realize that he has lost something more valuable than all his other goals. He has been helped to awaken to his truth by Portia. Now, he is desperate to find Annabelle. He can't wait to say the three words that Annabelle has demanded of him, and he can't find Annabelle. He had always been able to find Annabelle when he needed her every other time since they had known each other. In the most important time in his life, he can't find her. He knows he is responsible for her running away and being alone. He knows that he can stop her pain and bring her happiness but he can't find her. Everywhere he goes, someone reminds him of how stupid he has been. Everyone sees him as the brute who has hurt Annabelle.

Heath has always refused to allow Phoebe to see his weaknesses. Even in his attempt to gain a better level of existence with Phoebe Calebow, he has always taken a lower



position to give her a fake feeling of being on top. He has used sales manipulation strategies to try to have a friendly business relationship with her. While looking for Annabelle, Heath finally allows her to see the real, broken Heath Champion. He doesn't care about his appearance or his appearing successful to Phoebe. He finally is getting what he wants without even realizing it when she sees the man in love and hurting.

Phillips puts Heath in Phoebe's hands in this scene at the end of the chapter. This might be a balancing of the relationship between Heath and Phoebe. Heath had had Phoebe over a barrel several years before and that had caused Phoebe's distrust of Heath. Now Phoebe had what Heath wanted more than anything. Phoebe knew where Annabelle was. Phoebe's telling the secret put Heath and Phoebe back on an even plain.



Chapter Twenty-four

Chapter Twenty-four Summary

In Chapter Twenty-four Heath drives Annabelle's new car to the campground. It is night when he arrives and he knows he is too tired after his ten hour trip to talk to Annabelle. He sleeps in the car when he has parked so it blocks Annabelle in. The next morning Heath follows Annabelle out to the dock. He tells her he loves her. She doesn't believe him. She thinks he just has to win and she knows that she can't accept Heath's left overs. She won't be his compromise and second best. She leaves him on the dock, hurting and broken.

She goes back to her cabin and packs. She finds the car blocking her in and returns to the cabin. As she sits down and puts her head in her hands, she hears car tires. Portia with her blue face shows up at the door. Portia tells Annabelle that she is going to claim Annabelle as a Powers Agency client and introduce her to Heath. She attempts to convince Annabelle that Heath does love her. In the middle of Portia and Annabelle disagreeing Bodie enters the scene. After some talk, Bodie tells Annabelle to follow Heath and ask him two questions. She will know if Heath loves her when he answers them.

Annabelle does follow the path that Heath took and found him at a cliff top. As he stands against the sky, he reminds her of a gorgeous alpha male. She steps up and tells him that she has two questions. She asks where he phone is. He tells her that Pippi has it. She is surprised to learn that he gave it to her. She then asks if he has talked to Dean about being his agent. He tells her that he couldn't be bothered with Dean. Annabelle knows the truth then. She believes him. Later in bed after the loving, they write up their own pre-nup in the humorous, joyous way one would expect when Annabelle is in Heath's life.

Chapter Twenty-four Analysis

In Chapter Twenty-four Annabelle is mourning the lost of a great love. She knows that her first engagement was nothing compared to this love. However, just as she went on and became successful with the matchmaking business even as she had her personal crisis, she will keep on living and find love again. She can even thank Heath for some of the business skills she learned from him. She gives herself a time limit to mourn. She also wanted to get stronger so if Heath comes to her again and tries to close a deal, she will hold her own. She doesn't want someone's leftovers.

Heath surprises her at the campground. He goes to her on the dock and begins by telling her his whole name. He goes on to tell her about growing up with his father and the slew of women who moved through his life. None of the women stayed the forever as he wanted. He tells her that he loves her. She still doesn't believe him. She can't



allow herself to be in the pain it would give her to live with a man who didn't love her completely. She wanted it all.

When Annabelle can't get packed fast enough and get away, Portia and Bodie appear on the scene. Portia tries to explain how Heath reacts to being in love. She tells how much love and losing control scare Heath. Although Annabelle doesn't believe her, she still listens to the explanation and wonders if it could be true. Portia doesn't try to use her talents of working with a difficult client on Annabelle. Both women have the gloves off and are speaking in a straight forward manner.

Bodie is the man of the hour. He knows Heath better than anyone. He knows how to convince Annabelle without his arguing with her. He simply suggests two questions and basically dares Annabelle to go ask. Bodie and Portia both are used to help bring the happily ever after to fruition.

Finally the reader has the outcome and a subtle scene with Annabelle and Heath that completes the desire of the reader.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary and Analysis

Phillips jumps the story a couple of years ahead, which the reader learns from Pippi as she and Heath discuss the missing phones. She lost them when she was three and now she is five. Pippi watches baseball with Heath and Trevor Granger Champion. Pippi has a tape recorder of Heaths and is recording all the story since Heath and Annabelle decided to marry. Pippi tells that Portia and Rosemary are in the book club because they both need friends. Portia has joined Bodie and Heath at the Sports Agency and is head of the new Women's sports division. Pippi loves Dr.Adam, Annabelle's brother, who married Delaney and asked Pippi to be the flower girl. Bodie and Portia eloped and gave Pippi no chance of flower girl. Pippi enjoyed cuddling up to Heath and often was showing her jealousy of the six month old Trevor.

Pippi's monologue with looks at Heath when she mispronounced words added the humor which is a trademark of Susan Elizabeth Philliips. The cataloguing and completing all the information that the reader wants is done cleverly. The final paragraphs illustrate that Heath has kept his word to Annabelle. He has put Annabelle and their family's needs above all his other goals and he is content and happy. The final ending gives the reader that happy feeling of a good book as it says by Annabelle, "But I'm perfect for you." Phillips tells the reader that "The Python couldn't have agreed more."



Characters

Annabelle Granger

Annabelle Granger is the heroine of the book. She is over thirty and unmarried. She has a family of superachievers who continually attempt to help Annabelle to be a super achiever too. Annabelle has just inherited her grandmother's little matchmaking business. She has taken over her home and office and trying to change the business into a money-making endeavor. Annabelle needs important clients to move her into the public eye. Annabelle's friend Molly Tucker, who is married to a Star quarterback, offers to introduce her to her husband's sports agent. Heath Champion meets with Annabelle with the plan to get rid of her. However, he becomes Annabelle's client. Annabelle attempts to introduce him to the perfect woman. Annabelle learns a great deal which helps her with her business and pushes her along in her desire to own her own business. Heath learns that Annabelle is his perfect match.

Heath D. Champion

Heath is known as the Python in Chiago. He is about to swallow up the best clients for his sports agency. He is a top of the line salesman. He is also ethical and a very good agent. He is geared for success. He had played football in college and worked to get the degree. When he admitted to himself that he would never play pro, he went on to Harvard. He climbed the ladder of success and won. He had his big house but no one to share it. He had a man to come in and arrange his closet so he was always dressed well. He learned the manners that he was never taught in the one-parent home in the trailer park. Heath was successful. He had a difficult time admitting his love for Annabelle.

Mr. Bronicki

Mr. Bronicki is Annabelle's neighbor. He has lived across from Annabelle's grandmother for a long time. Mr. Bronicki has a good time coming over and fighting with Annabelle but he is like a grandfather to her as well. He is one of those who speaks up for Annabelle at a crisis time.

Molly Sommerville Tucker

Molly is Annabelle's friend. She writes and publishes Daphne the Rabbit children's books. Molly is married to Kevin Tucker. Her half-sister, Phoebe, is the owner of the Stars. Molly's husband, Kevin, is the quarterback and his agent is Heath. Molly and Kevin have two small children, Pippi and Danny. Molly is Annabelle's connection to the NFL.



Portia Powers

Portia owns a very successful matchmaking agency and is attempting to find Heath's match when Annabelle appears on the scene. Powers Agency has extreme high quality women who make very good trophy wives for rich men. Portia is as driven toward success as Heath. She comes across as a shark to Annabelle's tadpole. Portia will meet Bodie, Heath's friend as the book progresses. She will have her own emotional growth during the book.

Bodie Gray

Bodie is an ex-football player. He was injured and had to give it up. He went to work for Heath and meets with many of the young athletes that Heath recruits. If Bodie is free, he often drives Heath so Heath can work when he is running around the city and other places. Bodie and Heath have a good friendship, and it is apparent throughout the story. Bodie will be instrumental in making Annabelle believe that Heath really does love her.

Kate Granger

Kate is Annabelle's mother. Kate wants to make an accountant out of Annabelle. Kate has made a place in banking for herself and wants Annabelle to follow her footsteps. Kate has two other children, Adam and Doug who are highly successful. Kate has a knack of always making a compliment into a put down with Annabelle. Kate insists so much that Annabelle tries to keep away from her and the other 60-hour-a-week workers.

Rosemary Kimble

Rosemary was once called Rob and was Annabelle's fiance. Rosemary appears a couple of times during the book. Once Rosemary asks for Annabelle's friendship again and another time when Kevin says something about her at a breakfast. The third time Heath goes to find Annabelle at the publishing company and runs into Rosemary.

Dean Robillard

Dean is God's gift to women. He is the quarterback who is being groomed to step in when Kevin Tucker retires from the Stars as quarterback. He meets Annabelle and they play together. They are like brother and sister but Annabelle tries to use Dean to make Heath believe that she isn't in love with Heath. Dean is the other man in the book.



Sean Palmer

Sean is a new client of Heath's. Annabelle is drafted to show Sean's mother around the area. Sean comes by Annabelle's home from time to time and brings a buddy. Sean will be one of the party at Annabelle's house that breaks up Heath and Delaney.

Gwen Phelps Bingham

Gwen allows Annabelle to introduce her to Heath as a drop dead gorgeous possibility for marriage. Heath will only find out later that Gwen is married, and she and her husband are good sports for Annabelle's business. Gwen is a beautiful woman who is intelligent and could be queen.

Phoebe Sommerville Calebow

Phoebe is Molly's half sister and the owner of the Stars. She and her husband, Dan, have four children and have learned to handle success and family life. Phoebe had a run in with Heath when he first started as an agent and she lost the battle. She holds grudges. She doesn't like for most of the book. Only in the end does Phoebe become part of Heath's social group.

Delaney Lightfield

Delaney seemed like a perfect choice for Heath. Delaney came from the society life in Chicago. She doesn't put a foot wrong. She will be the perfect hostess for the people Heath wants to know around town. She enjoys sports but the less brutal type. She likes tennis. She likes opera. Heath and Delaney seem good together except Heath never relaxes around her.



Objects/Places

Sherman

Sherman is Annabelle's old Crown Victoria. It is too big for Chicago and for Annabelle. Annabelle tries to trade him off with Dean for his little sports car.

Wicker Park

Wicker Park is the area where Annabelle lives and has her office. It is her grandmother's home and one of places Annabelle felt accepting love growing up.

Champion Sports Management

This is Heath's fancy, sophisticated office where he meets with clients and does his business. He has several agents working under him to make sure his clients are well taken care of.

Beau Vista

The Beau Vista sign is in Heath's office to remind him that he came from a broken down trailer park.

Waterworks

Waterworks is the sports bar that is the "in" place in the book. Heath goes there to be available to possible clients. There is a long fountain that women run through and plaster their skimpy clothing to them.

Stars Practice Field

Phoebe calls Heath to the field when Dean is present to be sure that Dean realizes that she doesn't like Heath. She really has it in for him.

Theme from Jaws

Heath hears the theme every time Pippi comes toward him. He loses phones and more phones when she is around.



Blue Watering Can

The watering can is a plant to be used later when the two groups of football players come to her house. They drink everything. They even drink up the African Violet mixture in the blue watering can.

Mayfair Club

This is a stodgy club where Kate insists on having Annabelle's birthday dinner. Heath finds out that she is exactly what he wanted. Her family is an old one. She was even a debutante.

Beaches

Dean and Annabelle go to a couple of different beaches to have a relaxing time before Dean heads into practice and season.

Wind Lake Campground

Kevin's and Molly's cottages and B & B where the book retreat is held.



Themes

Families Stick Together

Heath is looking for a wife because he wants a family that will stick with him no matter what. He has decided that he should have a matchmaker find the perfect woman who will stick and teach his children to stick. Because Heath gave his love freely to too many women in his youth, he knows that giving love is guaranteed to hurt him. He doesn't want to be hurt again so he plans to withhold his love until he meets someone who meets his criteria and will prove they will not leave him. Looking for the woman is like a business deal to him and he treats it as one. He grows during the text into a man willing to fall in love and admit it. It is a difficult thing for him.

Dress for Success or Appearances Are Everything

Heath and Portia are both caught up in looking successful. Appearance is everything. Never to show any weakness and always be on top are the themes that both live their lives. Neither Heath nor Portia can relax and both fear losing control. Both characters believe they know themselves and who they are. They know about setting goals, self-discipline, and winning. They don't allow themselves anything but their goals to guide them. They don't want to be hurt again. Heath in particular grew up in the trailer park and crawled out and up. He learned about manners and hired someone to plan his closet. He wants a woman on his arm who knows the right people and how to keep up appearance. He wants someone who always says the right thing. He wants someone to make him look good. Heath and Portia both learn a lesson about control and vulnerability and life's happiness.

Follow Your Bliss

Heath has already followed his bliss in business and has become a success. Annabelle is in the midst of following her bliss and tweaking the ways to follow it. She understands that she wants her own business. She knows she likes people. Her life at the moment that the book starts hasn't been successful. She is floundering. She knows what she doesn't want. She knows that she doesn't want the same success that a sixty-four hour work week gives a person. As she takes over her grandmother's little matchmaking business and meets Heath, she learns how much she likes people and helping others to find happiness. Her matchmaking and having a loving family is her bliss. As she develops through the book, she achieves her bliss and a very happy life.



Style

Point of View

In the first chapter we have a whole chapter from Annabelle's point of view. We know what she thinks as well as what she says. We see her in action and get a hint of her character and her past.

In the second chapter we have Heath's point of view. The reader sees him in action at a sports bar when he is networking with other athletes. As the chapter progresses, the reader is allowed into his head to see some of his backstory. The reader realizes his greatest need is to find a woman who will be loyal and supportive of him. He wants a woman who will stick.

Point of View changes with chapters or sections of the chapter. Phillips keeps us updated with the thinking and actions of Bodie, Portia, as well as other characters as is necessary. She does not headhop between them during the scene but creates a scene per character point of view.

Setting

Most of the book is set in Chicago. They live in Chicago. Heath owns a big sports management business in the city. Annabelle lives and works through her home in Chicago.

The Windy Lake Camp is a romantic place and it lives up to expectations. Our hero and heroine have a teasing time there and finally a climax there.

Mayfair Club in Chicago is the setting for the birthday bash for Annabelle. Heath meets the family and learns she is more than what he wants. He proposes there.

A Lake Michigan beach for a date with Dean as well as a good scene with Sean Palmer's mother helps us see another side of Annabelle. She could easily be a hostess for Heath's client's families.

Portia Powers' office is one of the places that Portia shows her attitude as she consider her employees.

Language and Meaning

The language is modern and easy to read. The dialogue is real and always used to move the plot and sub-plots forward. Humor is obvious for much of the book. The action between Heath and Annabelle has a great deal of humor in it. Annabelle often uses her humor to make Heath more human. She might fall in love with him but she doesn't



worship him. The humor also cuts the legs under the very successful people who don't seem to be able to see any success but success their way.

The language allows the reader to see that life is humorous. Language does not have to be a negative influence. Phillips talks about serious things with humor. The meaning is clear. For instance, during the birthday dinner, Annabelle's mother tells Heath that the two brothers were swimmers. Annabelle thinks that she was a swimmer too but she didn't get medals. She had fun. Mrs. Granger is ringing the family chime of super achievers are the one who count. Annabelle isn't sold on that idea. However, with Annabelle, it isn't sour grapes. She marches to her own drummer.

Structure

Match Me If You Can is structured chronologically. The hero and heroine meet and begin to interact between each other. They have some scenes which move forward in time. The book doesn't immediately flip into flashbacks. The characters and characteristics of them develop slowly. The reader sees the person where he is and watches him grow as the book progresses. While there are some instances of backstory to give information about the character, it doesn't slow the pace or stop the action. If it is there, it fits. Phillips puts foreboding and plants in place in a subtle way which doesn't jar the reader when they are first introduced. However, the reader doesn't feel tricked because there is no hint of what is happening. Phillips structure keeps the reader interacting with the book. It is a very successful read.



Quotes

"Today's experience had justified her lifelong phobia of snakes" (Chapter One, p. 5% Kindle).

"Did you ever think it's more than coincidental that whatever business you attach yourself to goes bottom up? It's because you deal in daydreams not in reality. Like that whole fantasy you had about being an actress" (Chapter One, p. Kindle).

"Going into training for marriage was hell" (Chapter Two, p. 7% Kindle).

"We might...," Annabelle said thoughtfully, "...need to start looking a little lower on the female totem pole" (Chapter Two, p. 11% Kindle).

"Nothing and no one would keep her from making this match" (Chapter Three, p. 13% Kindle).

"The downside of being a matchmaker meant that she might never have another date. When she met attractive single men, she had to turn them into clients, and she couldn't let her personal life complicate that. Not a problem in this particular case...She gazed at Heath. Just being near so much unbridled macho made her want to break out in hives" (Chapter Four, p. 14% Kindle).

"If Annabelle Granger were a few inches taller, a hell of a lot more sophisticated, better organized, less bossy, and more inclined to worship at his feet, she'd have made a perfect wife" (Chapter Five, p. 22% Kindle).

"Annabelle amused him, but she didn't turn him on. Not really, Maybe he's thought about her sexually a couple of times, and he'd made a couple of smarmy references to fluster her. But nothing serious. Just messing around" (Chapter Six, p. 23% Kindle).

"Rachel said she would, but she didn't seem optimistic, and when Annabelle hung up, she felt deflated...and relieved" (Chapter Seven, p. 28% Kindle).

"That was when the Python struck" (Chapter Eight, p. 32% Kindle).

"She made them laugh—made him smile—and by the time they'd gotten to the end of the photos, he'd decided to forgive her" (Chapter Nine, p. 35% Kindle).

"Poor Dean needs a friend, not a lover," Bodie chuckled" (Chapter Ten, p. 39% Kindle).

"She soared with the comets...bloomed with the willows...exploded with the rockets. And in the end, she tumbled to the earth in a shower of sparks" (Chapter Eleven, p. 42% Kindle).

"Annabelle as a potential bed partner had no place in his life, and he needed to get a grip" (Chapter Twelve, p. 48% Kindle).



"She doesn't give herself enough credit. That's what makes her vulnerable. Her family's convinced her she's a failure because she's not earning six figures. She needs to be concentrating on making her business work, and I'm getting the feeling you deliberately turned yourself into a bad distraction" (Chapter Thirteen, p. 53% Kindle).

"He hadn't been thinking, that was the whole problem. He'd only been reacting, and in the process of getting what he wanted, he'd blown her dreams right out of the water. Now he had to make it up to her" (Chapter Fourteen, p. 57% Kindle).

"And then the edges of his mouth crinkled. "Way to go, Tinker Bill. This is exactly what I've been talking about" (Chapter Fifteen, p. 60% Kindle).

"He turned back toward her, and his eyes - so pale and remote they should have turned her to ice—felt like a warm balm to her shriveled soul" (Chapter Sixteen, p. 61% Kindle).

"If you ever have kids they'll come out of the birth canal with Fisher-Price stamped on their butts" (Chapter Seventeen, p. 65% Kindle).

"But when they made love, he saw another woman, one who was insecure, generous, and full of heart, and he couldn't get past thinking that this softer, unguarded woman was the real Portia Powers, Still, what kind of idiot fell for someone who needed so badly to be fixed" (Chapter Eighteen, p. 70% Kindle).

"Only the chicks were left. As she gazed at them, she knew Bodie had been right about her. All her life, she'd been driven by fear so frightened of falling short that she'd forgotten how to live" (Chapter Nineteen, p. 78% Kindle).

"Watching her with the men last night had opened his eye to something he should have realized weeks ago, Annabelle Granger was his perfect match" (Chapter Twenty, p. 81% Kindle).

"She was a product of that insular St. Louis socialite culture, which was exactly why I tried so hard—and so futilely, I might add—to talk Annabelle out of being a debutante" (Chapter Twenty-one, p. 84% Kindle).

"Right now, the only thing he understood was the depth of his own foolishness. He loved Annabelle. Of course he loved her" (Chapter Twenty-two, p. 90% Kindle).

"He spun on her. "I don't give a damn about Dean right now, Phoebe, and here's a news flash. Some things in life are more important than football" (Chapter Twenty-three, p. 92% Kindle).

"I'm the woman who won't settle for second place. I want the best," she said softly. "And you're not it" (Chapter Twenty-four, p. 94% Kindle).

"This was what he'd been searching for all his life. Women who'd stick" (Epilogue, Pg. 98% Kindle).



Topics for Discussion

Did you believe that Annabelle had really found her place in life when she started to build the matchmaking business? Did you think her mother was correct in thinking that Annabelle was acting like a loser and someone needed to direct her life?

Discuss the idea of dream/fantasy mates. Do you think that each person has one? Do you think that the real thing when someone finds a mate is very close to the fantasy idea?

What do you see in Heath that like? Dislike? Is he the perfect alpha hero?

Should a company have the right to weigh in another person? Is this discrimination? If you believe it is acceptable, what is the difference in weight (appearance) and skin color (appearance)?

Were you able to see any hints that Portia Powers could become human? Did Phillips paint her a complete cold-hearted female?

Do you think that anyone can be as successful as Heath if they were to be as nice as Annabelle seems to be? Do believe that Annabelle should have refused to sit with Heath during all introductions of women? Should she have be fair about the women? Can she get ahead in this manner?

How does Phillips use eating and food throughout the book? What did you think of the use throughout?

Talk about the ways that Phillips shows who Annabelle is? What do you like about her? What do you see as faults?

Discuss the Princess Party. Do you think that Heath's methods of attempting a reconciliation with Phoebe will work? Can he force her to change her mind about him?

Discuss the scene between Bodie and Portia. Is she really going along with Bodie because of Heath? Does she want to be Bodie and not able to admit it? Does she want to be overpowered? Or to be dominated because she doesn't want to risk the reject of not being loved? Did you see this scene as a consensual sexual meeting between two adults?

Did you expect the love scene at Wind Lake Campground? Did you expect each to understand that they were in love with each other? Did you think Annabelle did the right thing to try to cover up her feelings for Heath?

How did Phillips present the clues that Heath and Delaney would not make it to the altar or did you believe that they would?



Did you have a favorite part of the night at Annabelle's house with the Stars and the Bears? Did the dialogue seem natural?

Did you understand why Annabelle refused Heath before it was explained by Annabelle? Were you agreeing with her family when they urged her to say yes?

Discuss Annabelle's growth throughout the whole book? Did you see the change? What type of lesson does this share with the reader?

Do you think it was clever of Phillips to use Pippi and the tape recorder to tie up any loose ends for any of the characters that were introduced in the book? Did Phillips' humor make the monologue enjoyable?

Had you questioned Heath's ability to end his sixty hour weeks? Did you like the Phillips showed the reader that he and Annabelle had found real success in being a family?