

Wife by Wednesday Study Guide

Wife by Wednesday by Catherine Bybee

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Contents

Wife by Wednesday Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-3.....	4
Chapters 4-6.....	9
Chapters 7-9.....	14
Chapters 10-13 and Epilogue.....	18
Characters.....	24
Symbols and Symbolism.....	27
Settings.....	29
Themes and Motifs.....	30
Styles.....	32
Quotes.....	34



Plot Summary

“Wife by Wednesday” by Catherine Bybee is the story of Sam Elliot and Blake Harrison whose romance begins in the most unusual and unexpected way. Blake Harrison is a wealthy businessman and also happens to be the Duke of Albany, a small European country. His father passed away some time before and left a will that reaches out to Blake from the grave. Blake is a playboy and a womanizer. He is averse to commitment and marriage – his relationships never last past a year. But he faces a dilemma. If he wants the \$300 million fortune from his father, the ancestral home and his title, he has to meet the marriage stipulation laid out in his father’s will.

Blake thinks of a way to have his inheritance and avoid commitment. He contacts Alliance which is a matchmaking company. He arranges to meet the company’s president, Sam Elliot, at a coffee shop to begin the process. He is stunned when a petite, pretty red-head turns out to be Sam – Samantha Elliot. But she is confident of his skills and her company’s abilities and convinces him that she is up for the challenge. She will do a thorough job for him and find a slate of candidates that very afternoon for his review. And she will make sure that these women know that they will not be living a fairytale marriage as a wealthy duchess. The girl he selects to fill the role of his wife will know that the marriage will end in one year.

Sam is a normal female and immediately recognizes that whoever is selected will have a hard time not falling for the handsome and charming duke. She makes a note to advise the girls that they should plan to spend most of their year-long marriage far away from the attractive and sexy man. Sam is thrilled with the assignment. She needs a high-profile client like Blake Harrison to boost her business. And she is facing financial difficulties because most of her money is funneled into an exclusive rehab home for the care of her younger sister, Jordan, who had become disabled from a suicide attempt. Sam has had a troubled past. Her father served time in prison for tax evasion, her mother committed suicide and her sister tried to.

Blake finds Sam fascinating and when he learns about her troubled background and financial difficulties, he arrives at what he determines to be the perfect solution. He offers Sam the year-long contract to be his wife. At first she is hesitant but her financial issues compel her to accept the offer. She reminds herself that she can’t think of this very attractive man as her real husband and that their relationship is just a business one.

But the two are very attracted to each other and soon after their marriage in Las Vegas, the inevitable happens. Husband and wife become lovers. And, although they don’t vocalize their feelings, they begin to fall in love with each other. A vindictive former lover of Blake’s tries to drive a wedge between Sam and Blake but in the end true love wins out. After a bump in the road in the form of the will demanding that there be an heir on the way, the growing bump in Sam’s stomach solidifies their love and relationship as well as meets the requirements of the fine print in his father’s will.



Chapters 1-3

Summary

Chapter One

Blake Harrison needed a wife but not an emotional commitment. All he needed was a contract - a deal that would benefit both parties for a year - then each could go his and her separate ways. To make it work, he needed someone he wasn't even remotely attracted to. Blake wasn't about to pretend that he was in love. He decided to use a dating service to attain his goal.

Blake was explaining all this to Carter on the phone as Neil, his driver, was taking him to his appointment with Sam Elliot who would be helping him in this pursuit. Finding a wife before the week was over was crucial. It meant keeping his ancestral home and his title and what remained of his father's fortune. His fake marriage would have to appear real to satisfy his father's attorneys. If Sam Elliot couldn't come up with a good candidate, he'd have to think in terms of Jacqueline or Vanessa. Jacqueline wouldn't be a good choice because she had another lover. That left Vanessa who was hinting at exclusivity. But he didn't want to lead her on.

Neil pulled up to the curb and left Blake off in front of the coffee shop. Inside, Blake didn't see anyone who looked like a "Sam Elliot". He ordered a coffee and took a seat; he'd just have to wait for this Sam Elliot fellow. A petite woman with red hair who he'd noticed when he first came in approached him. She was Sam Elliot. He was taken aback; he'd expected a man. He felt like bolting but he wasn't a sexist. He decided to give her ten minutes to see if she had the plans and resources to meet his needs.

Sam had done her homework and knew exactly what Blake wanted. She also knew he wouldn't give her much time to make her case. He could trust who she came up with, she told him, because she did thorough and detailed background checks that would expose any problems with a candidate. Matching people was her specialty. She had a few questions for him. Had he been arrested or assaulted anyone? He answered that he punched a kid who was hitting on his sister when he was seventeen but he had never hit a woman. She asked for the name of his best friend and worst enemy. His best friend was Carter Billings and his worst enemy was his cousin, Howard Walker. Her fee would be twenty percent of what he offered his future wife in a prenuptial. The money for the woman would go into an account. If the woman tried to fight the arrangement, the money would be used for lawyers to fight her. Anything left in the account would go back to him. He was satisfied that she'd thought of everything. She'd have a list of prospective women to him by that afternoon.

Once back in her car, Sam allowed herself a silent celebration. The duke would be her ticket to the big time. It was just what her company, Alliance, needed. She'd have to make sure that the women she recommended understood that a fairy tale marriage to a



duke wasn't part of the deal. He was so good looking that it would be best if his wife lived in another country. Too much time with him would be a temptation for most women.

Sam had to stop by the extended care facility to see her younger sister, Jordan, who was suffering from depression. Her attempted suicide had resulted in a stroke. Sam headed for Moonlight Villas which was the exclusive facility where Jordan was. It cost her over \$100,000 a year to keep her sister there which was why she needed a big client like Blake Harrison. She was falling behind on other bills and didn't want her sister to wind up in a state facility. She knew that Blake would lose \$300 million if he didn't marry by the end of the month.

Chapter Two

Blake reviewed the files of the three women Sam sent over to him: Candice, Rita and Karen. There were no last names. They were all educated, cultured and beautiful so why did he have a sinking feeling that they were all wrong? Blake's assistant, Mitch, found some interesting things out about Sam Elliot. She was twenty-seven and was born in Connecticut. Her parents were Harris and Martha Elliot. Harris Elliot had been charged with tax evasion and embezzlement. She grew up living in a \$20 million dollar mansion and that family had vacation homes in France and Hawaii.

Blake recalled that Harris Elliot was a big New York businessman who had funneled his money through Ponzi schemes and had served time for tax evasion. Martha Elliot couldn't take the loss of status and committed suicide. Mitch had also found out about Jordan's attempted suicide and that Sam had dropped out of college and was paying for Jordan's care at an exclusive rehab facility. Blake thought back to his own family's relationship problems.

Sam prepared for a dinner meeting with Blake who wanted to go over the candidates with her. When she pulled into to the restaurant parking lot, there was no way to avoid valet parking. Out of necessity, she had given up opulent living and fine dining some time ago. The head waiter led her to a private booth where Blake was already seated. He had ordered wine and made a toast to a successful business relationship. They discussed his restaurant choice. She would have thought he would have picked a more casual meeting place. He said he wouldn't meet a beautiful woman in a bar.

Sam had to steer the conversation in a different direction. She knew she wasn't beautiful—attractive at best. She turned the discussion to the candidates. But he wanted to know about her. She reminded him that they weren't there to talk about her. He told her he had done some background on her. She responded that it didn't take much digging to find out about her – her father was a horrible criminal and her mother was a coward. She wasn't like either of them. Sam didn't want pity from him.

All three of the candidates had severed relations with their families which was why they were looking for financial security not love. She could give him their surnames if he wanted to check them out for himself. That wasn't necessary, he told her; he had already made up his mind. She thought he'd at least like to meet the women. But he



hadn't selected any of the candidates she had sent. Sam was disappointed; he must have found someone through another source. Blake handed her a file folder. He had and his lawyer had written it up that morning. Bottom line, Blake was offering her the marriage contract. Sam was shocked – she wasn't in the running!

As part of the financial arrangement with her, Blake would set up a trust fund for Jordan for life. Sam would earn \$8 million plus her fee of twenty percent for the year-long arrangement. They would go to a justice of peace or to Vegas to get married. She'd only be required to make a few appearances with him to satisfy his father's lawyers. He spent half his time in Europe and half in Malibu. She would have to make just one trip to London to sign some papers. She would be a duchess. Sam told him she'd look the contract over and think about it.

Chapter Three

After Sam agreed to become Blake's wife for a year, he made arrangements for a wedding in Las Vegas. They flew to Vegas in his private jet. He sensed she was nervous and poured her a flute of champagne. It was just that she wasn't a good actress. Blake commented on her sexy voice. Sam asked if he had told his girlfriends about his marriage. She knew he had two girlfriends and that their "marriage" could make him lose both. He admitted that Vanessa would be more hurt than Jacqueline. If they found out about her, she was sure they would try to meet her. After the landed, he asked her if she was ready to get married.

They held hands on the altar. She gave him the ring that he'd given her to give him. She was stunned when he slid on a four-carat diamond-encrusted sapphire ring on her finger. "For my duchess," he said. After the minister pronounced them man and wife, Blake took her in his arms and kissed her. She hadn't been kissed in such a long time. She wondered if he felt the kiss as deeply as she had.

Blake slept on the couch in the hotel suite and Sam had the bedroom. He thought about the kiss and wanted to repeat it. He needed to be away from her; he was too attracted to her. In the morning, he ordered breakfast from room service. He told her they would return to LA the next day and then he'd go on to London. They'd have to maintain frequent phone contact to keep up appearances. He insisted that she take his name. Before he left for London, he would give her the keys to his house and would set up an account for her. He told her to shop at designer stores – not big box stores. She had an image to maintain.

Analysis

Chapter One

Blake Harrison is looking for a wife but not in the conventional sense. He is a Duke from European royalty and will lose his inheritance and ancestral home if he is not married by the end of the month – just a few days away. He enjoys his playboy lifestyle and isn't prepared to marry for love and make a serious commitment; he wants only a financial



arrangement with the appropriate woman. His father is deceased but his lawyers are charged with carrying out his wishes – that Blake be married and settled down by the timing that he has ordained.

Blake needs to find a woman that he is not in love with or even attracted to, who wants and needs a financial deal and who is willing to end the arrangement in a year. The prenuptial arrangement will provide the woman with a fortune once the year is up. Neither one of his current lovers will fit the bill so he has decided to employ the services of a professional matchmaker. He wants to be presented with candidates who will meet all his needs and who fully buy into the arrangement. At this point in the story, Blake is not an endearing character due to his cynical approach to marriage. But maybe there is hope for him.

Blake has made arrangements to meet Sam Elliot at a coffee shop to start the search. He has only a week to find the woman, enter into the prenuptial contract and get married. When Blake meets Sam Elliot he is stunned that Sam turns out to be Samantha. Immediately, the possibility that a relationship will blossom between Blake and Sam pops into the reader's mind. Could Sam be the candidate or could a real love affair develop between the two? Sam is experiencing financial problems and certainly could use the money.

Chapter Two

Sam is not the tall, shapely blonde that Blake is generally attracted to but there is something that intrigues him about her. When he discovers that she is paying for her younger sister's upkeep in an expensive rehab facility, he knows that she would be vulnerable to an offer of a lucrative deal which would entail her being his wife and a duchess for a year. When he presents this idea to her, she is stunned and stresses that she is not on the menu. But he is persistent. He holds out a carrot that she cannot resist. Part of the prenuptial deal will include his paying for her sister's care for the rest of her life. Sam, who was worrying about having to pick up the lunch check, is understandably interested in the deal. The fact that she'll receive \$8 million dollars plus herself is also something that many women could not turn down. She's already recognized how attractive he is so it wouldn't be a dirty job.

More is revealed about Sam's background. Her mother committed suicide and her father served time for tax evasion. She had been forced to quit college in order to take care of her sister who had a debilitating stroke after she tried to take her life. Money would mean a lot to Sam. Although she considers him a womanizer, Blake could be the answer to many of her problems. Although she tries to brush it aside, she can't help but notice how attractive Blake is. Obviously, some kind of relationship between the two is brewing.

Chapter Three

Sam accepts the offer although not enthusiastically. She has to focus on how the deal will help her sister. Her sister's care has almost bankrupted her. By looking at the deal



as a way to continue her sister's stay in the exclusive rehab center, she can tell herself that her act isn't cynical and self-serving. She is becoming more attracted to Blake and is relieved to learn that he will spend half the year away from her in Europe. But there are also signs that he is growing more attracted to and fond of her. Will he really stay away from her for six months?

Discussion Question 1

Why does Blake Harrison have to find a wife? What do these stipulations suggest about Blake and his father's relationship?

Discussion Question 2

Why is he surprised when he meets Sam Elliot? What does this tell readers about Blake?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Sam's sister in the rest home? Where is the rest of her family? What is Sam's role in her family?

Vocabulary

prenuptial, ancestral, broach, pompous, cunning, portfolio, latte, nonchalant, squelch, embezzlement, dysfunctional, prospective, scenarios, opulent, impersonation, touché, traverse, transient, audible, stipulations, entourage, bravado, lucrative



Chapters 4-6

Summary

Chapter Four

Just a day after they said “I do” Blake and Sam caught the attention of the media as they landed back in LA in Blake’s private jet. He ushered her through the crowd of reporters. He told them she was the love of his life. Their photos were in the tabloids and on TV. Carter was there to meet them and told her to call him if she needed anything while Blake was gone. She had a tour of the Malibu mansion that she now had access to. But after Blake left she returned to her own rented townhouse from where she also ran her business. Her friend and employee, Eliza, dropped by and was amazed by all the reporters outside.

Eliza answered a call and explained to the caller that Alliance wasn’t an escort service. The calls kept coming so they turned the business line off temporarily. They would have to come up with a standard statement to give the callers. Sam realized that the deal could bring in new business. Eliza thought it was a huge deal that Sam was a duchess even though it was only temporary and in name only. Sam explained how Blake’s father had stipulated that if he hadn’t settled down by his thirty-sixth birthday that he’d lose everything. His cousin would get the lion’s share of the money, his mother and sister would get only a small amount of the inheritance and the rest would go to charity. Blake called and told Sam to issue a press release about their marriage. He said to refer to them as “Lord and Lady Harrison, the Duke and Duchess of Albany.” Hearing the actual titles blew Sam away. She told Eliza that she was in over her head.

The next day, Blake called Sam while she was jogging on the beach. He told her to use his credit card and shop. She would be meeting dignitaries and important families when she came to London; she’d have to dress the part. She told him she would be getting her passport in ten days. He said ten days wasn’t fast enough; he’d see that it was sped up. He told her that he was having a hard time sitting still hearing her sexy voice and picturing her running on the beach. She flirted back and told him that he’d be disappointed if he could see her cutoffs. She questioned the wisdom of allowing the relationship to get so personal between them.

Later back in her townhouse she opened the door expecting to see a reporter. Instead it was Vanessa. She was blonde and glorious and dressed in Gucci. Sam was dressed in Target. Sam didn’t invite her in but Vanessa pushed past her. Vanessa looked Sam up and down and wondered what Blake had seen in her. Sam asked her to leave but Vanessa didn’t move. She asked if Blake knew about her sordid background. Sam told her that Blake knew everything and that looking like a desperate woman wasn’t attractive. After Vanessa left in a huff Sam texted Blake that she had stopped by. She decided to take Blake up on his urging to shop. Later, Blake was pleased to hear that



Sam had gone shopping and had bought designer dresses and accessories. She had her hair and nails done in a high end salon.

Chapter Five

Vanessa's visit to Sam upset Blake. Married less than a week he was already trying to find a way to keep his wife and lover apart. If Sam needed him he'd fly back right away instead of waiting until Sunday night to return. He planned to escort Sam back to London with him. He instinctively knew that it would be better to be an ocean apart from her.

The media was apparently following another scandal and was leaving the new duchess alone. She recalled how she'd been hounded by the media with her father's scandal. They even followed her across campus and bugged her apartment. From that experience, she knew immediately from the clicks she heard when she picked up her land line in her townhouse that her phone was bugged. She also figured that cameras had probably been set up in her townhouse. Sam texted Blake telling him "to play along" when she called him. She played the loving wife on the phone while at the same time texting him that her line was bugged and that she was being watched. Sam laid on the sexy act as she messaged him. Blake caught on and responded with sexy and loving comments. She told him she planned to move into the Malibu mansion. As she walked around, she texted him that she had spotted one of the cameras.

Blake decided to come back early. He sent a message to Neil to go to Sam's house right away. Someone was having Sam watched. Would his cousin or his father's lawyers go to such lengths to deny him his inheritance? Blake was angry. He would crush whoever was responsible for this. Once back in Malibu, Neil told Sam she could stay in his suite.

Sam had a fitful sleep that night. She merged old dreams of her family's trying times with her current situation. She woke with a start. Blake, who'd been asleep in a nearby chair, rushed to her. He embraced her and she let him. They discussed the bugging. Someone was going to great lengths to catch them in a lie. He vowed to find out who was behind this illegal activity. Blake suggested they show whoever was watching them just how wrong there were. They'd go over to her townhouse so she could pack more things. He was going to have a team of technicians sweep her townhouse before they arrived. The team would locate the cameras and then Sam and Blake would play to them. Kissing and heavy petting would be convincing.

Chapter Six

The technicians confirmed that Sam's phone was bugged. They found cameras all about her house. Her car was clean. Sam was concerned that someone had broken into her house. On the drive over, Sam admitted that she was nervous about kissing him. What if she wasn't convincing? Blake said he would handle that. He said kissing would be the easy part; stopping would be the hard part. He gave her a quick kiss on her lip for practice. As they packed her clothes, he pulled her close and kissed her and rubbed



his hands up and down her body. She couldn't deny the desire that was growing within her. He lifted her in his arms and carried her to the bathroom telling her he wanted to make love in the shower.

Even though he was out of the range of prying cameras he continued kissing and holding her. Sam suggested they turn on the shower... for audio impact. He admitted that he wanted her. They could change the rules of their agreement. They were both adults with an obvious attraction for each other. Although she was tempted, she stopped him and told him she'd think about it. She insisted on putting his shirt on as proof that they had sex in the shower. She wet her hair, pulled his shirt on and kicked her jeans off. She told Blake to take a cold shower.

Back at the Malibu mansion, Blake told his staff to take care of Sam's needs. Sam was going to have to approve the reception plans that were being made for Albany Hall. His mother would be helpful since she'd planned many celebrations there. She still lived at Albany Hall and was the Duchess of Albany for many years before he married Sam. She realized that he had to do what was necessary to secure his inheritance. Their relationship had been solidified by the commonality of hating his father. Sam didn't have to worry about his mother but his cousin Howard was another story. He would inherit a generous amount of money were Blake to default on the agreement. Blake didn't have a British accent because he spent so much time in the U.S. and he worked hard at not sounding anything like his father. The reason his father set up such a circuitous route for Blake to inherit the family fortune and title was because his father always had to have the last word – even in death.

Blake's father was a typical British royal. He was pompous and married his mother knowing he'd be unfaithful. Blake's mother had a miserable marriage but didn't leave him probably because of his money. But they did live separate lives. His father wanted Blake to be just like him. Instead, Blake ventured out on his own and made a fortune in the shipping industry. His father wanted to control him but Blake was a self-made man.

It was Saturday, the day that Sam visited Jordan. Blake wanted to go with her and meet her sister.

Analysis

Chapter Four

One sign that Blake is not viewing Sam as merely a financial deal is the protectiveness he shows toward her and his concern for her welfare. He also doesn't want to wait then days for Sam to get her passport. Apparently, he wants her to join him as soon as possible. He is not shy about making sexual or romantic overtures toward her. He is a duke and a handsome man who is accustomed to getting his way with woman. He feels that his title and status gives him a green light to behave however he wants. Although Sam tries to maintain a distance from him, she appears to be as tempted as he is to become involved.



Vanessa proved to be a rude elitist but one thing she did was inspire Sam to go shopping. She comments that she was wearing Target to Vanessa's Gucci. If Sam were unconcerned about Blake, she probably wouldn't feel the need to compete with one of his lovers. Vanessa is a scorned woman and obviously dug into Sam's past referring to her background as "sordid". Because she is hurt by Blake's marriage, Vanessa may strike out at Sam and expose her family problems to the media. She could sabotage their arrangement.

Chapter Five

Blake is not kidding himself about Sam. He realizes that keeping her an ocean away would be the best way to remain true to their agreement. He is becoming more and more attracted to her. He doesn't seem to be concerned that Vanessa is upset about his marriage which demonstrates that he has no deep feelings for her.

News that Sam's townhouse had been bugged compels Blake to change his plans and return to Los Angeles earlier than he planned. He is worried that his cousin and his father's lawyers may be suspicious of his quick and unexpected marriage. They may assume that he married Sam just to meet his father's requirements for him to receive his inheritance and title and are going to try to prove it. When Blake says they could use the hidden cameras to prove that whoever planted them was wrong, he apparently intends to prove to prying eyes that he loves Sam and that their marriage is real. How far will Sam be willing to go to prove his point?

Chapter Six

The sexual tension between Blake and Sam is escalating and neither one seems to be fighting it much. Blake has proposed that they make an amendment to their contract that would allow them to have a romantic relationship. Although Sam is obviously attracted to Blake, she hesitates at his suggestion. She has never been in a relationship that had a shelf life and would end at a date certain. Sam is probably beginning to have feelings for Blake. He's been so accommodating and kind to her and wants to spoil her. Will she be able to resist his charms?

As much as Blake claims that he detests his father and his memory, he is more like him than he probably would be ready to admit. His father was a womanizer but so is Blake. His father made his mother's life miserable. If he falls in love with Sam, who he is legally married to, would he expect her to accept his infidelity like his mother did with his father? Sam doesn't appear to be the type of girl who would go along with such an arrangement. Things are getting more complicated.

Discussion Question 1

What did Vanessa's visit inspire Sam to do?



Discussion Question 2

When was Sam's phone bugged in the past and why?

Discussion Question 3

Although Blake was not fond of his father, how is he like him?

Vocabulary

disembarked, ploy, pragmatic, anonymity, paparazzi, dignitaries, boisterous, squelched, sordid, proverbial, monogamy, traumatic, paranoid, expletive, feisty, potent, certifiable, imperative, mercenaries, martyr



Chapters 7-9

Summary

Chapter Seven

Blake charmed the staff at Moonlight, her sister's rehab center. Jordan even reacted to him and seemed taken by him. He met with Moonlight's administrator about the center's security and about the care that Jordan was receiving. He thought that Jordan could be cared for at home. He didn't press the issue when he saw the topic upset Sam.

Sam offered Eliza a partnership in Alliance since she wouldn't be available to run it. Because of the bugging and surveillance, Sam and Blake decided it would be best to stay together to prove that their marriage wasn't a sham. She needed Eliza to do some field recruiting work. Karen at Moonlight agreed to introduce Eliza to some good contacts. Sam couldn't help but notice that Blake didn't even look twice at the gorgeous Karen when they were at Moonlight. Sam would still help with the background investigations.

Sam was all decked out in a sexy new outfit when Blake came home. Dinner was all set out on the table. She let him know that she gave the cook and maid the night off. They were alone. Blake could hardly get through his meal. He so badly wanted to take her in his arms. Finally, he could wait no longer and pulled her to him and kissed her. She had decided to agree to change their agreement. She wanted a full year with him. He carried her to the couch in the next room where they made passionate love.

Sam asked Blake if Vanessa or Jacqueline had a drawer in his dresser. He told her that neither one was "drawer worthy". In fact, neither one of the women had even been at his Malibu mansion. Sam revealed that she had only two lovers before Blake. After her father's problems, she wouldn't let herself get close to anyone. Sam told Blake that she liked knowing that she was the only one who'd been there.

Chapter Eight

When Sam and Blake arrived in his private jet in London, Sam was wearing jeans and a casual top. They were both shocked when Linda Harrison, Blake's mother, was there to meet them. She was dressed to perfection and Blake knew that Sam would feel bad meeting his mother for the first time dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. Blake was impressed with how engaging and charming Sam was with his mother. Linda seemed to warm up to Sam and told her that they'd have to go shopping. Sam wanted to be sure that their shopping trip included Blake's sister.

They got a room at the Plaza near the airport to recover from their jet lag and would move to Albany Hall the next day. Blake was upset that his mother ambushed them at the airport but Sam defended her. She was naturally curious about her son's wife and she probably wanted to make sure she wasn't five months pregnant. The next morning,



they prepared to go to Albany Hall for the rest of their stay. Sam would be meeting Gwen, his sister. Blake was sure that they'd get along.

Sam had private doubts about what she had gotten herself into. Memories of her father's crimes and deceit surfaced. She didn't relish the idea of deceiving Blake's family. Dan, her lover at the time, had drawn her in to get at her father. Dan was the man who eventually put her father behind bars. He had recorded all their conversations and used them to help the prosecution. He and a federal agent had confronted her with Dan's true identity and threatened her with her mother's incarceration unless Sam cooperated with the prosecution. Her mother had nothing to do with her father's crimes. The sins of her father had caused the death of her mother and the disability of her sister.

Blake thought Sam was worried about meeting his sister and other family members but what she was really worried about was whether she had made the right decision. What if she did something that messed everything up and his mother and sister wound up with nothing. What if Linda took the same path as her mother had? Sam was astonished by Albany Hall – it was the size of a small castle. There were thirty-five rooms including a ballroom, a conservatory and a library.

Gwen was young and friendly and very warm toward Sam. She was happy to have someone near her own age in the family. Also greeting Blake and Sam were an aunt and uncle and several cousins including Howard. It was nice for Sam to have a "sister" again. It made Sam sad to think of where her own sister was. Sam noticed that Howard was keeping a watchful eye on her. He asked Blake if he'd known Sam a long time. They met last month, Blake told him, adding that he knew it was the right thing to do. His Uncle Paul had the nerve to ask if Sam was pregnant. Blake was enraged but Sam remained cool and told Paul that she wasn't pregnant. Then Adam, another cousin, commented that Blake must have married her because of the will. Sam said they just didn't understand the depth of their feelings for one another. Linda and Gwen thought their love affair was romantic. Sam wondered to herself what lengths Howard would go to in order to get the inheritance.

Blake met with the Parker lawyers the next day. They weren't thrilled with Blake's marriage since they would have received twenty-five percent of the estate had Blake failed to meet his father's demands. Blake told them he and Sam were very happy. Mark Parker told him that it would be up to him and his wife to prove that. There was an addendum to the will that Blake had neglected to read which said that he had to be ready to continue the family line with an heir. The baby didn't have to be born before his thirty-sixth birthday but a baby would have to be on the way.

A baby! Blake thought that Sam would make a beautiful mother but he decided to keep this new bit of information to himself for the time being.

Chapter Nine



It was Blake who remembered that it was the one-month anniversary of their marriage. Blake had plans to celebrate the occasion and whisked Sam away without telling her where they were going. They walked to the stables where a stable man readied their horses. The last time she rode was before the scandal. Blake said they were heading to a cottage on the estate for a private lunch.

The cottage was secluded in a clearing. After they let the horses drink from a stream they headed for the cottage. When Blake opened the door, and Sam was stunned. A beautiful table was set with fine linen, china and crystal. A bottle of wine was chilling in an ice bucket. She was delighted and turned to kiss him. He said it was supposed to be “eat lunch first then make love” but it turned out just the opposite. They couldn’t get enough of each other.

Albany Hall was filled with guests anxious to meet the new duchess. Blake was proud of her and how beautiful she looked that night. Once in the ballroom, Sam and Blake danced the first dance alone with cameras flashing and people applauding. The party was a huge success and lasted into the wee hours. Back in their room, they talked about how their fathers had done them both in. His father was reaching out from the grave and her father had made her doubt every man who ever walked into her life. Blake thought about bringing up the “heir” issue but hesitated. She had talked with Mark Parker that evening. He apparently didn’t mention anything about a baby in the offing.

Analysis

Chapter Seven

Once again Blake shows his affection for Sam by being concerned about her sister’s safety and care. It was his thought that Jordan could live at home. When he realized the subject was a sore one for Sam he dropped it. But Blake’s thoughts about Jordan are a sign that he would welcome her in his home – something that would thrill Sam. There would be no problem with affording nurses to take care of her.

It means a lot to Sam that she was the only woman who had stayed with Blake at his new Malibu mansion. She lets him know that she trusts him by telling him that she hadn’t been close to anyone else since her father’s problems. She found it hard to trust anyone – it was obvious that she was at least beginning to trust Blake.

Chapter Eight

Blake is impressed and perhaps a bit surprised that Sam has the manner and demeanor of a duchess. She is tactful and charming with his mother. She keeps her cool even when Blake’s mother “ambushes” them at the airport. Sam is not wearing her finest compared to Linda who is decked out like a duchess. But it is Sam’s sophisticated personality and gracious demeanor that makes her truly a duchess.

It is revealed that Sam is fighting demons from the past which explains why it has been nearly impossible for her to trust a man. Her lover was actually an undercover agent



who was using her to nab her father. It was an awful experience that wounded her deeply. She naturally became skeptical of the attentions of men after being burned so badly. Part of her has to worry that she will be hurt again in her relationship with Blake. It is wrought with heartbreak – it is a year-long relationship with a man who is a known playboy and womanizer. How can she not get hurt?! They seem to be falling for each other but he has made the comment that his relationships end in less than a year. Will this one be different?

Blake has been thrown a real curve ball. In order for him to get his inheritance an heir must be on the way soon after he marries. Now that would be a lot to ask of someone with whom he has made a contractual arrangement. It is a huge problem and it is not at all clear how he will handle it. He will lose his title and inheritance if there is no heir apparent.

Chapter Nine

Sam thinks to herself that falling in love with her husband wasn't part of the deal. Could the love she is beginning to feel for him be enough for her to agree to have his baby? He hasn't explained the fine print in his father's will about an heir, something that he wasn't even aware. Their agreement is going to have to be amended quite a bit if she agrees to a pregnancy. If she does become pregnant, would Blake still end the marriage in a year? He commented that he grows tired of his lovers even before a year with them is up.

Discussion Question 1

How does Samantha ingratiate herself to Linda Harrison when they first meet? What does this reveal about Sam?

Discussion Question 2

What past experience has made Sam unable to trust a man? How is this affecting her relationship with Blake?

Discussion Question 3

What important part of his father's will did Blake fail to notice? What does this say about Blake? How do you think Sam will react to this when she finds out?

Vocabulary

aphasia, Alzheimer, surveillance, turmoil, blatant, volatile, succulent, masochist, mewling, umber, nauseous, charismatic, conservatory, proclamation, stoic, stipend, contingencies, codicil, callousness, cryptic



Chapters 10-13 and Epilogue

Summary

Chapter Ten

As soon as Samantha returned to the states, she visited Jordan who, slurring her words, told Sam that she missed her. Jordan said she'd been eating. Sam brought her Chinese takeout. Jordan missed her mother. So did Sam.

Blake had to go to New York and wanted Sam to go with him. As exciting as life with Blake was, she knew that it would end. She knew that it was emotionally risky to get too accustomed to it. She told Blake that she needed to spend more time with Jordan. He offered to have her moved to the mansion. He'd hire full-time help to look after her. It would be hard on Jordan to be here for a while and then have to return to a rehab facility. Sam had to look out for her long-term interests.

Blake attended a cocktail party in New York. It was filled with beautiful women but all he could think of was Sam. Sam was filled with guilt over Jordan. One day at the New York office, Vanessa paid Blake a visit. She was angry that he hadn't told her about his plans to marry. She would have been able to help him instead of the mousy woman he was married to. Blake didn't appreciate her insulting his wife. She insisted she wasn't jealous. She warned him that he had tied himself to a woman who was raised by a criminal and it would come back to haunt him.

Sam had feeling very fatigued. She made an appointment with her doctor to get a more reliable source of birth control than condoms. Dr. Luna asked her how she'd been feeling. In addition to being tired, she had lost her appetite and was a little nauseated at times. After further examination and a quick test of her urine, the doctor told Sam that she was pregnant. Sam was devastated. She could picture the loving look fade from Blake's face replacing it with anger and disgust. His trust in her would end the moment she told him the news. By the time she reached her car, tears were streaking down her face.

Blake talked to his friend and attorney, Jim Melina, about his dilemma. Jim could sense that Blake had feelings for his contracted wife. He suggested that he could solve his father's heir stipulation by getting Samantha pregnant. If she cared half as much for him as he appeared to care about her, she might agree to have a baby.

Chapter Eleven

When Blake returned home, his cook Mary told him that Sam had been in her room all day. She hadn't been eating and Mary couldn't help but hear her crying. Sam was sobbing when Blake opened the bedroom door. She pointed to the box of condoms on the night stand and said that they didn't work. She was pregnant. He was shocked. He gathered her in his arms and told her everything would be fine. The next morning Sam



slipped out of bed and took a hot shower. When she returned to the bedroom, Blake had brought breakfast upstairs for them. While she slept the night before, he had read up on pregnancy and learned what pregnant women liked to eat during their first trimester. She stressed again that she hadn't gotten pregnant intentionally.

They cleared up the fact that they both wanted to keep the baby. Although they had an agreement to end their marriage in a year, a baby could change things. They needed to proceed slowly. Sam said she would be a mother forever how long their marriage lasted was an unknown. Blake promised that he would not abandon her or the baby. For the sake of the child, they needed to leave the option to continue their relationship beyond a year open.

Chapter Twelve

Sam suffered from morning sickness during most of her first trimester. Blake stood by her side and made any trips he had to take as brief as possible. They kept her pregnancy quiet for the time being. Her queasiness disappeared at the start of her second trimester. She began re-doing one of the bedrooms into a nursery. Blake scolded her for moving furniture about in her delicate state. He told his staff that Sam was pregnant and admonished them for allowing her to move the heavy furniture. Blake didn't want to take any chance that the baby could be hurt. Blake made Sam promise that she'd ask for help in the future and that she wouldn't attempt to paint the nursery. Inhaling paint fumes wouldn't be good for her or the baby.

They flew to London and announced Sam's pregnancy at a small family dinner party. Blake caught the stoic look on Howard's face. It was Blake's father's fault that he and his cousin were at odds. By setting up the will and naming Howard second in line for the title and inheritance, he immediately made Blake and his cousin competitors, even adversaries. Blake was consumed with Sam and the baby. At their last appointment, they had heard the flutter of the tiny heartbeat. He was already feeling a connection to the child. He felt love for his child and love for Sam.

Blake felt a little slimy when Mark said that he had fulfilled his father's requirements and that they would meet to sign all the papers after the baby's birth. Sam was nearby and overheard part of the conversation. They stopped in New York for a few days on their way back to California. While Blake was in meetings, Sam shopped for maternity clothes and baby things. While looking at baby rattles, someone tapped her on the shoulder. It was Vanessa. She was just as nasty and venomous as Sam remembered. She told Sam that she was naïve to think that they would be one happy little family. Blake needed an heir to receive his inheritance. He probably poked a hole in his condoms. Sam was upset. She had overheard Parker tell Blake that he'd met all his father's requirements. Maybe that was why he wasn't upset about her being pregnant. But she was conflicted – she thought of how caring he had been and how he was so concerned about her and the baby.

Sam researched condom use on her computer. Her doctor had told her that pregnancies resulted in two percent of condom use. She found the old box of condoms



and ran water through several of them. Each time, water dripped through from the bottom. There was nothing to conclude other than Blake had obviously orchestrated her pregnancy.

In the mean time, Blake was meeting with Jeff, his attorney. He had put a tail on Vanessa after the incident at Sam's townhouse. Jeff displayed several photos that had been snapped of her by his investigators. He noticed one in which Vanessa was talking to a woman who he recognized but couldn't place. Blake took that photo with him. Jeff's investigators couldn't find anything linking Parker or Howard to the bugging of Sam's townhouse.

Sam packed her bags and had them sitting on the doorstep. Sam was crushed. Blake made her fall in love with him and had just been using her after all. Blake came home and saw her packed bags. She asked him when he planned to be honest and tell her about the requirement in the will for an heir? Didn't he think she'd find out?! He was no better than his father! He tried to reach out to her but she told him not to touch her. He explained that he found out about the heir requirement after they were married. He didn't admit to damaging the condoms. She left and walked out of his life.

Chapter Thirteen

Blake recognized that Sam needed some time to cool down. Pregnant women were very emotional. Jeff called to tell him that his private investigator had witnessed Vanessa cornering Sam in a department store and that Sam looked upset when she left. Suddenly, Blake remembered who the woman in the photo with Vanessa was. Her name was Naomi and she was a secretary for Parker & Parker which means that Vanessa probably knew about the heir stipulation in his father's will. He asked Jeff to do something very important for him.

Blake checked the computer to see what flight Sam booked for California. When he logged on he saw that Sam had been researching condoms. He found the old box of condoms that had actually belonged to Vanessa. He held one up to the light and saw that it had a hole in the end. Vanessa had been trying to get pregnant! Blake figured that Sam must have found the damaged condoms and figured it was him who had poked the hole in them. He called Carter who had several friends in the NYPD. He needed a favor.

Twenty-four hours later, Blake stood in front of the exclusive condo where Vanessa lived. He watched her leave the building and caught up with her. He saw Carter and an undercover detective walking toward the building. Blake pretended that he was unhappy with Sam and his marriage. He told her that she had tricked him and had gotten pregnant. The baby might not even be his. He got a text message from Carter, "Got her!" He changed his tone and told Vanessa that he loved and trusted Sam. He told her that the police had just searched her condo and found everything they needed to prove that she had been behind the bugging of Sam's condo. Blake would use whatever means possible to make her pay.



As soon as Sam got back to California, she spent the night with Jordan. After she had been back three days, Blake was standing at her condo door. He asked for just five minutes to explain everything. Vanessa had been trying to get pregnant. She knew before he did about the heir clause. She was the one who had rigged the condoms in order to get pregnant. He also told her that Vanessa had been behind the illegal surveillance. He realized that he should have told her about the heir codicil but one day blended into the next and he didn't think it was important. He asked for her forgiveness. She could forgive him but she didn't know if she could continue playing house with him and then leave when the year was up. She had fallen in love with him. He loved her, too, he told her. If she was waiting for the day when he would ask her to leave, she'd be waiting a lifetime. Although the timing was completely upside down, Blake knelt down and asked Sam to marry him... forever. Right when she told him "yes" she felt the baby move.

Epilogue

They named their son Samuel Edmund Harrison. Samuel was for "Samantha" and Edmund was in his father's honor – he was the person who unwittingly had brought them together. One afternoon, Blake, holding little Eddie, led Sam downstairs for a surprise. Standing there were Linda, Gwen and Blake's household staff. Jordan was in a wheelchair being tended to by her personal nurse. It was their one year anniversary and he had planned a wedding ceremony so that their family could be with them. He promised to have a special surprise for her on every anniversary. When they were married again that afternoon Sam said "I do... a thousand times over".

Analysis

Chapter Ten

Sam was understandably shocked when she learned that she was pregnant. Instead of being happy to know that Blake's baby was growing inside of her, she immediately thought that he would be upset and suspect that she had gotten herself pregnant. Of course, she didn't know that he'd be elated. It would solve his problem with the requirement of an heir in his father's will.

Vanessa made a last ditch effort to turn Blake against Sam. She threw up Sam's family problems and referred to her as a criminal. She warned him that it would come back to haunt him. Vanessa is a woman scorned and may not be satisfied until she has some revenge. What could she have planned for Blake and Sam to drive a wedge between them?

Chapter Eleven

Sam is astounded that Blake isn't upset to learn about her pregnancy. He hinted that the baby could change their relationship from its one-year agreement to one with longevity. Blake still doesn't tell her about the heir which he may regret later if Sam learns it from someone else – namely Vanessa. Blake is again showing his protectiveness toward



Sam and now their baby. The baby appears to mean more to him than just something to mark off a checklist on his way to an inheritance.

Chapter Twelve

Vanessa's plan for revenge is revealed. She somehow knew that having an heir was one of his father's stipulations in his will. She assumes that Sam doesn't know about this requirement and makes it appear that Blake had used and manipulated her. Naturally, Sam is crushed and even though she knows that Vanessa is vindictive and "venomous" and could be up to no good, what Vanessa is telling her has plausibility. She thinks back and recalls how she had been surprised that Blake hadn't been upset at news of her pregnancy. When Sam discovers that the condoms were damaged intentionally, she is convinced that she's been duped. She had finally been able to trust a man again, but she's apparently been taken in by another man who is no better than his controlling father and no better than her own father.

Blake's attorney, Jeff, had hired private investigators to follow Vanessa in an attempt to find out if she'd been behind the bugging of Sam's townhouse. A woman in a photo with Vanessa is familiar to him but he can't place her. He takes the photo with him hoping his memory will be jogged. The identity of this person could be key to learning who was behind planting the surveillance cameras and hidden mics and who had invaded Sam's privacy. Finding out who was out to sabotage his marriage becomes all the more urgent as Blake watches Sam walk out on him.

Chapter Thirteen and Epilogue

Blake does some investigating of his own. From the research that Sam had done on the computer, he figures out that Vanessa knew about the requirement of an heir in his father's will before he did. He recalls that the woman in the photo with Vanessa is one of Parker's assistants. Blake concluded that this woman had let Vanessa know about the heir codicil and it was Vanessa who had poked holes in the condoms, hoping to get pregnant and trick Blake into making her the duchess. His discoveries made him understand why Sam was so upset. He could have avoided a lot of problems had he told her about the heir requirement when he first found out about it which was when he found out that Sam was pregnant. But he failed to do so and now was paying for it.

Blake is able to convince Sam that he hadn't manipulated her into getting pregnant. He also convinced her that he was in love with her and that his love wouldn't end when the contract ended in a year. In the end, Blake not only inherited \$300 million dollars and his ancestral home and title, he found love and a family in the most unexpected way.

Discussion Question 1

Why was Sam initially upset when she learned that she was pregnant?



Discussion Question 2

How did Blake show his concern for Sam and his unborn child? What does this suggest about Blake and Sam's relationship?

Discussion Question 3

How did Vanessa know about the “heir” clause in his father’s will before Blake did? How can her character be described?

Vocabulary

tantalizing, veranda, palpable, mingle, stilettos, snide, antibiotic, queasy, malaise, prenatal, ironclad, negate, unscrupulous, paramount, trimester, complacent, decipher, sequestered, paraphernalia, venomous, mandated



Characters

Blake Harrison

Blake Harrison is a wealthy businessman and is also the Duke of Albany, a small European country. Blake's father passed away and left a will stipulating that Blake must be married by his thirty-sixth birthday in order for him to have his inheritance and title. But Blake is a playboy and commitment is an anathema to him. He proudly states that his relationships never last past a year. But if he wants the \$300 million fortune, the ancestral home and his title, he has to meet the marriage stipulation laid out in his father's will.

Blake contacts Alliance, a matchmaking company, and meets with the company's president, Sam Elliot, to start his search for a wife in name only. He is stunned when Sam Elliot is actually Samantha Elliot, a petite, pretty red-head. But she is a professional and convinces him that she can deliver for him. She will do a thorough job and find a slate of candidates who are willing to enter into a contractual agreement with Blake and will understand that they will not be living the life of a wealthy duchess; the girl Blake selects to fill the role of his wife will understand that she will be generously remunerated for playing the role of his wife and that the marriage will end in one year.

But there's something about Sam that Blake finds fascinating and he offers her the year-long contract to be his wife. At first she is hesitant but her financial issues compel her to accept the offer. Although Blake had no intention of finding a real wife, as always life is full of surprises for him. The newly married man and wife are attracted to each other and they begin to fall in love. Although a former girlfriend tries to sabotage their relationship, it survives the assault and lasts past the expiration date. Blake finds love and marriage and a family in the most unexpected way.

Sam Elliot

Samantha "Sam" Elliot is a young woman in her late twenties and is the president of her own company, Alliance, which is a sophisticated high-end matchmaking organization. She has had many struggles in her life. Her father served time in prison for tax evasion following a huge scandal. Her mother couldn't bear the shame and committed suicide. Her younger sister, Jordan, tried to commit suicide but failed. However, her attempt caused her to have a stroke which landed her in a rehab facility for the disabled. Sam's company is making money but it is all going to her sister's upkeep at the expensive rehab center.

Blake Harrison, a wealthy playboy and the Duke of Albany, contacts her. He needs to find a wife and right away. He will lose his inheritance if he isn't married by his thirty-sixth birthday which is coming up the next week. He wants to find a woman to marry in name only. The woman to whom he will pay a small fortune must agree to a divorce



after a year. Blake is taken with Sam and quickly decides that she will be the perfect candidate for his temporary wife. She needs the money because of her sister's care and eventually accepts the offer. Although she tries to resist, Sam finds herself more and more drawn to Blake. When it's obvious that he feels the same way, the two begin the start of a real love affair.

When Sam learns that she is pregnant, it sets off a whole series of ramifications. She fears that Blake will think she got pregnant on purpose. However, Blake just found out he needed an heir to be entitled to his inheritance. When she finds that out, she thinks he tricked her into getting pregnant. When everything is finally ironed out, Sam and Blake decide to stay together not just for the sake of the baby but because they love each other.

Jordan Elliot

Jordan Elliot is Sam's younger sister. Her attempted suicide caused her to have a stroke. She is disabled and lives in an exclusive rehab home. Sam pays for her care.

Vanessa

Vanessa was Blake's lover before he met Sam. She is vindictive and bitter that Blake married Sam and she is out for revenge. Ironically, it was Vanessa's machinations - intended to trap Blake into marrying her - that result in Sam getting pregnant and solidifying Sam and Blake's true love for one another.

Mark Parker

Mark Parker is one of Blake's late father's attorneys. The law firm of Parker & Parker was hired to make sure that Blake met all the requirements of his father's will before he could inherit his father's fortune, ancestral home and title.

Jeff Melina

Jeff Melina is Blake's friend and attorney. He hires private investigators to follow Vanessa in an effort to learn if she was behind bugging Sam's town house.

Linda Harrison

Linda Harrison is Blake's mother. She is the widow of the Duke of Albany. She had a difficult marriage because of the Duke's infidelity. She stayed with the Duke because of his money and status.



Gwen Harrison

Gwen Harrison is Blake's younger sister. She is warm and friendly and welcomes Sam into the family. She is happy to have someone in the family who is close in age to her.

Howard Walker

Howard Walker is Blake's cousin and number one enemy. If Blake fails to meet the stipulations of his father's will, his fortune, ancestral home and title will all go to Howard.

Samuel Edmund Harrison

Samuel Edmund Harrison is Blake and Sam's infant son and heir to the Duchy of Albany. He is named for his mother, Samantha, and for Blake's father, Edmund, who unwittingly brought Sam and Blake together.



Symbols and Symbolism

Alliance

Alliance is the name of Sam Elliot's matchmaking service. Brad Harrison contacted Alliance in his pursuit of a wife.

The Will

Blake's father's will is what compelled Blake to find a wife by his thirty-sixth birthday. If Blake was not married by then he would lose his inheritance, ancestral home and royal title.

The Marriage Agreement

Blake and Sam entered into a marriage contract to satisfy the stipulations in his father's will. They would be married in name only, the marriage would be dissolved in one year and Sam would walk away with \$8 million.

Electronic Bugs

Sam discovered that her townhouse was bugged. Her phone lines were tapped and there were miniature cameras placed all around the house.

Designer Clothes

Blake encouraged Sam to wear designer clothes instead of her usual Target fare. After she married him, she was a duchess and had to maintain a certain image.

The Heir

The first time Blake reviewed his father's will he failed to notice the stipulation that he had to have an heir on the way before he would be entitled to his inheritance.

Sapphire Ring

Sam was stunned when Blake slipped on a four-carat diamond encrusted sapphire ring on Sam's finger at their impromptu wedding in Las Vegas.



One-Month Anniversary

Blake surprised Sam with a romantic lunch in a quaint cottage on the Albany Hall Estate in England to celebrate their one-month anniversary.

Blake's Shipping Business

Although Blake was a wealthy royal, he pursued a career in the shipping industry. He became a self-made millionaire which irritated his snobbish father who believed that royals shouldn't work.

Private Investigators

Blake's attorney hired private investigators to follow Vanessa to learn if she was behind the illegal surveillance of Sam's townhouse.



Settings

Malibu

Blake Harrison has a new mansion in Malibu. Although Sam doesn't want to move into the mansion after she first marries him, she eventually does and is pleased to hear that none of his other girlfriends had stayed there with him.

London

After Blake and Sam marry, he takes her to London to meet his family including his mother, sister and cousins. A huge reception is held for the newlyweds in Albany Hall.

New York City

Soon after Sam and Blake marry, they stop off in New York on their way back to California. Blake has some business appointments there including one with his attorney. Sam goes on a shopping expedition in Manhattan.

Tarzana

Sam's townhouse is in Tarzana, California. She lived there and ran her business from the townhouse. After she discovers that her townhouse is bugged, she decides to move into Blake's Malibu mansion.

Las Vegas

After Sam agrees to marry Blake, they fly in his private jet to Las Vegas where they are married in a Vegas chapel.



Themes and Motifs

Trust

One of the main themes in the story of Blake Harrison and Sam Elliot in “Wife by Wednesday” is trust. Sam Elliot had been hurt in the past by trusting the wrong people. For one, she naturally trusted her father but he let her down and violated her trust through his criminal activities that shed a bad light on her and haunted her ever since. While federal investigators were trying to make a case against Sam’s father, an undercover agent named Dan started a romantic relationship with Sam for the purpose of learning more about her father. Sam fell for Dan who taped her conversations and used them to prosecute her father. She was twenty-one at the time and was so hurt by the relationship that she didn’t let anyone get close to her for many years.

Once bitten, twice as shy... due to her past relationship problems Sam had a difficult time trusting Blake. They began their relationship as an impersonal business one but there was an obvious attraction on both sides and it soon evolved into a very personal one. However, Sam had her doubts all the time about Blake’s feelings for her. Although he appeared to really care for her, Sam could never relax and let herself be loved and enjoy him due to her past issues with trust.

When Sam discovers that Blake withheld a vital piece of information about their relationship and his father’s will, she is convinced that he had used and manipulated her. Her history of hurt over violations of trust doesn’t allow him any margin for error and she leaves him. When he finally is able to explain the huge misunderstanding, Sam again must go through the fragile process of learning to trust him again.

Commitment

One of the main themes in “Wife by Wednesday” by Catherine Bybee is commitment. Blake Harrison is a wealthy businessman and a member of European royalty. To be entitled to his inheritance and ancestral home and to maintain his title of Duke of Albany, he had to be married by his thirty-sixth birthday according to his father’s will. But Blake was a playboy and was averse to any thoughts of marriage and commitment. He boasted that none of his relationships lasted a year because he grew tired of them and didn’t want to lead anyone on.

But to get his \$300 million dollars and the other perks he had no choice – he had to be married. He engaged the services of a matchmaking organization that was run by Samantha “Sam” Elliot. She understood that the candidates she sent him would understand that Blake Harrison would not be making a commitment to them. They would have to agree to a divorce in a year – but they would make a small fortune for carrying out the unusual arrangement.



Blake is taken with Sam and decides that she is the perfect choice to be his temporary wife. She has financial problems and reluctantly agrees to the arrangement. But she has no intention to make a commitment either. She had a horrible experience with a man a few years back and has not allowed anyone to get close to her since. She is committed to her company and to her sister, her only surviving relative.

After the two have an impromptu wedding in Las Vegas, things change very quickly. There is a strong attraction between them and Blake begins acting like a new man. He is suddenly worried about Sam's safety and welfare. He feels protective toward her and can't stand to be away from her. Although he doesn't vocalize it, or maybe doesn't even realize it, he is falling in love with his wife. Meanwhile, Sam is struggling with resisting Blake's charms because she knows he is not the kind to commit. Besides, she reminds herself, their relationship is just a business arrangement.

Finally, Blake and Sam admit their feelings for each other and Blake takes a huge step – at least for him – and commits to be with one woman forever. He tells her that he'll always love her and if she is waiting for him to say their time together is up, she will be waiting a life time.

Abandonment

The issue of abandonment is one of the main themes in the novel "Wife by Wednesday" by Catherine Bybee. Samantha "Sam" Elliot had been abandoned on many levels. As a child she enjoyed the good life provided by her father who was ostensibly a very successful businessman. However, he was really a crook who was accused of embezzlement and served time for tax evasion. Sam was abandoned by the father she thought she had and stripped of the only life she had ever known. Her mother could not take the shame and humiliation of the scandal and committed suicide. Sam, therefore, was also abandoned by her other parent.

All she had left in her nuclear family was her younger sister, Jordan. But she had problems, too, and tried to follow in her mother's footsteps. Her suicide attempt failed but it caused a severe stroke that left her disabled. The sister she loved had also abandoned her and was replaced with a girl who was little more than a vegetable. They had been close but there was no more sharing of thoughts and dreams for Sam with a sister who could barely talk and understood little.

Sam had been involved with a man named Dan. But he abandoned her as her lover when he revealed that he was an undercover agent who was amassing evidence against her father. After that disastrous affair, Sam would not let anyone close to her. She had been hurt and abandoned one time too many. She met Blake years after her affair with Dan ended. It was difficult for her to trust Blake, but eventually they fell in love and love conquers all. After she learned she was pregnant he vowed to her that he would never abandon her or the baby. And he stayed true to his word.

Styles

Point of View

“Wife by Wednesday” by Catherine Bybee is written in the third person narrative, limited omniscient. By writing the story of Blake Harrison and Sam Elliot from this point of view, the reader is privy to the thoughts, ideas, intentions and motivations of the these two main characters. Since the story is about an unexpected relationship, the growing feelings and doubts and fears about their budding romance are made clear to the reader while they, of course, remain unknown to the principles themselves.

Sam Elliot first meets Blake Harrison when he contacts her to help him find a wife. As the title suggests, he needs a wife right away in order to secure his inheritance. When the Blake Harrison character is first introduced he is portrayed as a womanizer and playboy who wants nothing to do with commitment or marriage. The story quickly evolves and it comes as no surprise when Blake decides the Sam could fill the bill for the wife he needs.

Starting with this premise, the only way to effectively tell the story is from the third person narrative. The narrator is able to convey the growing feelings that both Blake and Sam begin to have for each other and the doubts they have about one another and their relationship. It would not have worked as well if the perspective was from just one of the main characters because it would leave the feelings of the other main character unknown to the reader. Although the characters, of course, don't know the inner thoughts of one another, the story is engaging for the reader who can see Blake and Sam continually drawing closer to one other.

Language and Meaning

“Wife by Wednesday” by Catherine Bybee is a light romance that is written in a straight-forward manner. There are no mysteries or complexities to the characters or plot. The reader is able to anticipate plot and story line revelations because of the simplistic nature of the story.

Although the premise is about Blake, a young man who had always been averse to marriage and commitment, he changes rather quickly after meeting Sam. The two have a relationship that is strictly business but Blake pushes the relationship to an intimate level by his flirtatious words and his sexual innuendoes. Although Sam tries to resist Blake's advances to her, she begins to respond to Blake's come-ons with her own double-entendres and flirtations and suggestive comments.

When Blake brings Sam to London to meet his family, which has ties to royalty, he is impressed with Sam's manner. She demonstrates true sophistication and charm under the most stressful of circumstances. Even when a rude cousin asks her if Blake married Sam because she was pregnant, she handles the awkward moment with tact and grace.



Vanessa, a former girlfriend of Blake's, is bitter over his marriage to Sam and tries to sabotage their relationship. After being confronted by Vanessa, Sam calls her a venomous "viper".

Although the story is light and easy to understand, there are many sexual situations that are intimate and somewhat graphic. If the story did not contain these passages, the book could qualify as young adult.

Structure

"Wife by Wednesday" by Catherine Bybee has thirteen medium-sized chapters which are followed by an epilogue. The story is told in a chronological manner with no flashbacks and only has some references to incidents in the past. The book ends with a preview of the author's new book, "Not Quite Mine".

The story begins when Blake Harrison, a wealthy businessman and the Duke of Albany, is looking for a wife. He needs to find a wife right away in order to be entitled to his inheritance. His father's will stipulates that Blake must be married and settled down by his thirty-sixth birthday which is coming up in a matter of days.

The story then transitions to a budding romance between Blake and Sam Elliot who he had actually hired to find a woman who for a very generous fee was willing to be his wife in name only. The majority of the story is focused on the growing affection and attraction that Blake and Sam have for each other. Conflict arises when Sam becomes pregnant and she is told that Blake tricked her into becoming pregnant because the will also stipulated that an heir must be on the way.

The conclusion of the story is told in the epilogue when Sam and Blake celebrate their one year anniversary with their family and with Eddie their new baby boy.



Quotes

I don't need emotion clogging up something as important as a marriage agreement.
-- Blake (Chapter 1)

Importance: This quote captures Blake's opinion of marriage when the story begins. It is an agreement to him not an emotional commitment.

Blake hurts everyone... eventually. You'll discover that soon enough.
-- Vanessa (Chapter 4)

Importance: Vanessa, Blake's scorned lover, tells Sam what she has to look forward in her relationship with Blake. Vanessa, of course, doesn't know that their marriage is a financial arrangement, and Sam can't tell her that.

I never found anyone drawer-worthy.
-- Blake (Chapter 7)

Importance: This was Blake's way of telling Sam that his other girlfriends didn't have any clothes or belongings in his bedroom suite. In fact, none of them had ever been at his new Malibu mansion. He's trying to convince her that she is special to him.

There are some things in life you just know are the right thing to do.
-- Blake (Chapter 8)

Importance: Blake was responding to Howard's questions about marrying Sam when he'd known her such a short time. Howard was suspicious that the marriage was just an arrangement.

Samantha was having a hell of a time shaking the jet lag, and they'd been in Europe for over a week. Then again, living a lie was exhausting.
-- Narrator (Chapter 9)

Importance: This passage captures how ill at ease Sam was with the deceit she was having to live under in order to fulfill her arrangement with Blake.

Falling in love with her husband was not part of the plan.
-- Narrator (Chapter 9)

Importance: The arrangement between Blake and Sam was supposed to be just a financial one. This quote demonstrates that it was becoming much more than that.

The internal clock in her head, counting backward with the time she had remaining as Blake's wife, was getting louder every day. The harder she tried to ignore the click, the worse it dug into her soul.
-- Sam (Chapter 10)



Importance: Reality is dawning on Sam. As much as she is enjoying her relationship with Blake, it is one that is predestined to end.

If she cares about you half as much as you seem to care for her, she might say yes to having your baby.

-- Jim Melina (Chapter 10)

Importance: Blake's lawyer gives him some non-legal advice.

I just found out I'm pregnant. I'm going to be a mother forever. That's the only solid thing I know is going to happen. Everything else is a big fat question mark.

-- Sam (Chapter 11)

Importance: Sam is placing her baby and her motherhood at the top of her priorities and future. Whether she and Blake stay together is an unknown and could change. The fact that she will be a mother will not change.

His gaze fell to his wife in the sea of people, pulling her in for a hug. Identifying his love for their child collided with another reality. His love for Samantha.

-- Narrator (Chapter 12)

Importance: This passage captures the moment that Blake admitted to himself that he was in love with Sam.

Damn him. Damn him for making her love him, trust him, and then blowing that all to hell.

-- Sam (Chapter 12)

Importance: Sam is crushed when she learns that in order for Blake to inherit his fortune, he had to have an heir. Sam assumes that he manipulated her into getting pregnant.

I love you, Samantha Harrison, and if you're waiting for the day I ask you to leave my life, you'd best be willing to wait a lifetime.

-- Blake (Chapter 13)

Importance: Blake has fallen in love with Sam and the one-year deal is off. He wants to spend a lifetime with her.