

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *SUNSHINE BEACH*

WENDY WAX

"[Wax] writes with breezy wit and
keen insight into family relations."
—*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

One Good Thing

A NOVEL

BOOK CLUB KIT

A LETTER FROM
WENDY WAX

Dear readers,

I'm not the glass-is-half-full person I'd like to be.

In almost any situation the worst-case scenario pops into my mind. If there's turbulence, I know the plane is going down. If I can't find my cell phone, I assume someone's already found it and is emptying my bank account.

TEN BEACH ROAD's Madeline Singer is exactly the opposite. Although she lives in my former house and has the same number of children I do, she is almost relentlessly positive.

When she and two other Ponzi victims are left with nothing but shared ownership of a crumbling beachfront mansion that they're forced to spend a long sweat soaked summer restoring, it's Maddie who creates a tradition of coming up with at least one good thing to toast at sunset. A task that often proves challenging.

Enclosed you'll find a suggested book club menu that includes an item featured on the Food Network's Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives, discussion questions, the story of how a person (me!) who can't carry a tune came to write a song, and how to hear the song itself.

I hope you'll decide to read *One Good Thing* and that you'll enjoy the added material that goes along with it.

If you do, I hope you'll consider recording and sharing your #OneGoodThing on social media while you're together. It can be a special person in your life, an event, or something good that happened to you that day or in the world in general.

Because one good thing *should* lead to another.

Wishing you all good things,

Wendy



DISCUSSION

Questions

- 1 When the book opens, Bitsy Baynard is dealing with the fact that her husband stole all of her money and ran away with another woman. Do you think Bitsy should have made Bertrand sign a prenup? Do you believe in prenups?
- 2 Bitsy and Bertrand were initially introduced by Nicole Grant of Heart Inc., who worked as a matchmaker. Do you think matchmakers can be a successful way to find love? Would you ever hire a matchmaker?
- 3 William Hightower could have any woman he wants. Why do you think he is attracted to Madeline Singer? Will asks Maddie to go on tour with him, and Maddie is reluctant to do so. Do you understand her reluctance? Why do you think women often have such a hard time putting their needs first?
- 4 Nicole is terrified that Joe no longer wants to marry her, that something will go wrong during her pregnancy, and that she'll fall short as a mother. Why do you think Nikki feels this way? Have you ever been in a situation where you knew your fear wasn't warranted, but you were terrified anyway? How did you handle it?
- 5 Avery Lawford is an architect and licensed contractor who finds the aromas surrounding construction relaxing. She attributes this to spending time on her father's construction sites as a child. What is your stress buster? When and how did you discover it?
- 6 Chase and his son Jason are at odds for most of the book, and Avery finds herself caught between them. Do you think she handles the situation well? How do you feel about Chase's behavior? Why is he so tough on Avery?
- 7 What do you think Bella Flora symbolizes for Maddie, Nicole, Avery, and Kyra? Is there a family home or a place like Mermaid Point that holds particular significance for you? Why? Would you risk losing it for the chance to achieve a lifelong dream or goal?
- 8 Kyra has to decide whether or not to let her son, Dustin, star in a movie with his father. What do you think she should do? Would you let your child star in a movie? Is that kind of pressure and attention good or bad for a child?
- 9 What do you think of the tiny house movement? Would you want to live in a tiny house? How many square feet would you need to feel comfortable?
- 10 At the end of each day, Maddie, Nicole, Avery, and Kyra share one good thing to toast at sunset. What—or who—is your one good thing today? Wendy Wax would love to know, so be sure to share your #OneGoodThing on Twitter or Instagram, or on Wendy's Facebook wall.

BOOK CLUB *Menu*

Cheezy Doodles:

A lot of them.

Wendy: Go to store. Buy industrial size bag of puffy cheesy snack without which character Avery Lawford believes life simply isn't worth living. (Two to three smaller bags combined will do.) Pour into large bowl and consume.



Ted Peter's Famous *Smoked Fish Spread*

Courtesy of :

This sunset staple was featured on Food Network's Diners, Drive Ins and Dives. (Recipe courtesy of Scripps Networks, LLC)

Ingredients

- 12 ounces smoked trout, boneless and skinless
- 1/2 cup sweet relish
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup onion, minced
- 1/4 cup celery, minced
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- Cracker
- Hot sauce

Directions

- 1 Flake the fish into pieces.
- 2 Mix all the ingredients for the sauce together in a medium bowl.
- 3 Gently mix the fish into the sauce and combine well to make an even spread.
- 4 Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 5 Transfer to a serving dish or ramekin and fluff fish with fork.
- 6 To eat, spread fish on top of the saltine crackers with several drops of hot sauce. Enjoy!

Beverage of choice

for toasting each other and sharing your One Good Thing:

Wendy: The ladies of Ten Beach Road are equal opportunity drinkers. They've shared their One Good Things over all kinds of beverages. However, blender drinks are always a hit. Beach and sunset a bonus but not required, sharing your one good thing with your group is!



BONUS

Background music:

Sound effect of waves washing on and off shore is a good mood setter. So is character William Hightower's seminal hit Mermaid in You, which you will read about later in this kit.

Mermaid IN YOU

*How a person unable to carry
a tune came to write a song.*

I am not musical. I do not have a voice or, I've been told, an ear. Even my shower wishes I wouldn't sing.

I did take singing lessons briefly as a child and received an award for 'most improved' because as my teacher explained at the recital, someone who begins completely tone deaf can only improve. In high school I learned enough chords on a guitar to be dangerous and occasionally performed with a friend whose voice won her the lead in the senior class musical. My part included a lot of smiling while singing as quietly as possible.

This doesn't mean I don't enjoy music. There are lots of songs that make me nod my head, drum my fingers, and tap my feet. But I never forget that no one wants to hear me sing.

I tell you all this so you'll understand how surprised I am that I co-wrote a song inspired by my novel *The House on Mermaid Point* and then had the pleasure of seeing it recorded.

It all started while I was brainstorming what kind of situation to send my Ten Beach Road characters into for their new renovation-turned-reality TV series, *Do Over*. I decided they'd have to deal with a homeowner who didn't want them there. Someone with a lot of baggage and even more reasons not to cooperate. The result was William Hightower, aka William the Wild, an aging down on his luck southern rock legend who was vehemently opposed to having his private island in the Florida Keys turned into a Bed and Breakfast over which he'd be expected to preside.

As I wrote the novel, I referred frequently to Will's hit song, *Mermaid in You*. I mentioned that he'd named his island after that song, and I knew it was important to him. I was pretty sure it was about how he'd messed up his life and lost a woman that he'd loved.

I fantasized that the song, once it magically existed, might even be performed in a YouTube video. An even larger fantasy that the Rock Bottom Reminders might one day consider performing it evaporated when I realized they'd disbanded years before.

It was only after the book was finished,

revised, and copyedited that I finally made the time to sit down to write lyrics for William Hightower's mega-hit. It was a hefty/meaty thing fraught with meaning and littered with ties to the sea and even to fly fishing, which were things that mattered to Will.

There was a minor hiccup when I remembered that I not only can't carry a tune, but don't know the first thing about creating music. Then I remembered that two of my cousins had been in bands when we were growing up. One of them had cut a record with his group. The other had gone to California to pursue his love of music. They agreed to look at what I'd written. It wasn't long before one of them pointed out that what I'd sent weren't actually lyrics and thoughtfully provided a Google link on song writing. The other let me down a little more gently, but finally admitted that he didn't have the time.

I thought I was going to have to finally let go of the idea when a new friend told me that two of her sons were musicians and that they might be willing to take a look at my lyrics. They did. Not being related to me, they didn't send me any Google links or song writing advice. In fact, one day I heard from my friend that her son was in town and wanted to play me a rough of *Mermaid in You*.

I met Ian Koteles at a Starbucks where he handed me his version of the lyrics, sent the song to my phone, placed headphones on my head, and told me to hit play. I listened to *Mermaid in You* at least a dozen times that day. Each time I heard new detail and fell in love with it a little more.

The same is true of the performance video that you can watch on my website and on YouTube. I'm thrilled that Ian and Evan Koteles of 10th Concession brought *Mermaid in You* to life. (It remains William Hightower's seminal hit, shows up in the most recent Ten Beach Road novels, and is even available on iTunes!)

It was an exhilarating collaboration. A toe dipped into waters I never thought I'd swim. Sometimes it's the unexpected and unlikely things we do that mean the most. I have to admit that I am really excited to have co-writing credit. Something this tone-deaf non-musical writer never imagined.

Don't forget to share your #OneGoodThing on social media, whether individually or as a group, we would love to see what makes your list!

ALSO BY
WENDY WAX

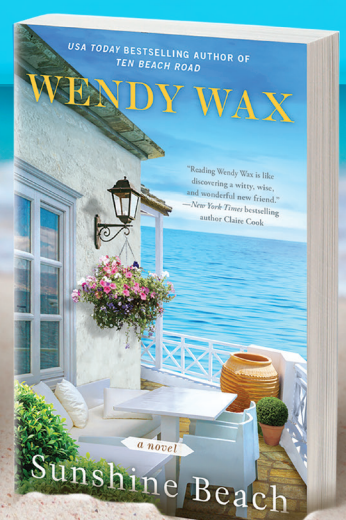
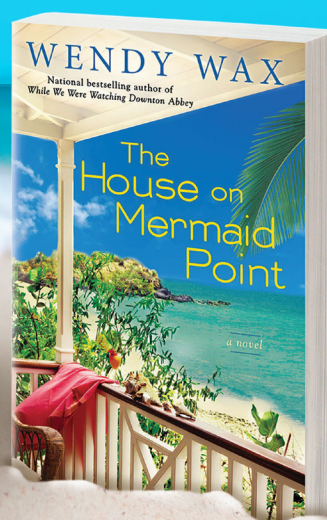
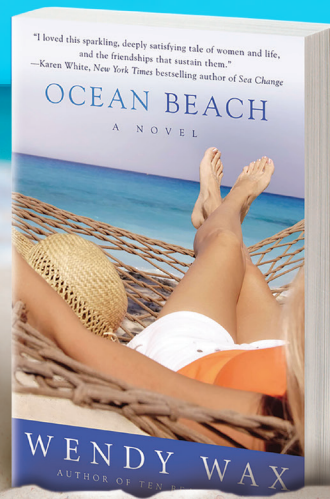
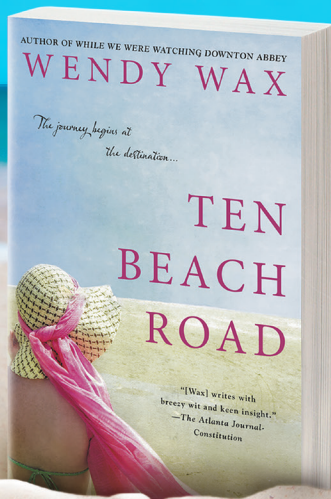


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Wendy Wax, a former broadcaster, is the author of thirteen novels, including *Sunshine Beach*, *A Week at the Lake*, *While We Were Watching Downton Abbey*, *The House on Mermaid Point*, *Ocean Beach*, and *Ten Beach Road*.
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