



"[Wax] writes with breezy wit and keen insight into family relations."—THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

My **EX**-Best Friend's Wedding

A NOVEL

WENDY WAX

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF TEN BEACH ROAD

Book Club Kit



Dear readers,

Thanks so much for choosing to read *My Ex–Best Friend’s Wedding*.

Like all of my novels, *My Ex–Best Friend’s Wedding* explores family relationships and the kinds of friendship that get us through the toughest times. But this book is especially personal in that it was inspired by a wedding dress that’s been in my family for generations and, less happily, by a friendship that was lost.

It revolves around Lauren Jameson and Brianna Williams who met in kindergarten and believed that being born on the same day made them sisters, and Kendra, the woman who mothered them both. From the moment the girls learn to read, they dream of becoming famous writers.

The story begins just days before their fortieth birthday. A day on which Bree is dealing with a marriage that hasn’t quite delivered on its happily-ever-after and is running the Outer Banks bookstore she owns while trying to finish the novel everyone knows she’s been working on for fifteen years.

Lauren, now the acknowledged “Queen of Beach Reads,” receives an unexpected marriage proposal that leads her back to the Outer Banks, her former best friend, and the family wedding dress she never thought she’d wear.

It’s while trying on “THE DRESS,” as they call it, that Lauren discovers that everything her mother told her about her family and their past is a greater fiction than anything she’s ever written.

I hope that you’ll enjoy Lauren, Brianna, and Kendra’s story and that this book club kit will enhance the discussion.

Wendy

Behind the Book

DESPITE HAVING WRITTEN FIFTEEN NOVELS

and two novellas, I'm still surprised when long ago experiences that I had no idea I actually remembered, rear their heads and inspire a new character, a story thread or detail, or even an entire novel.

When my mother (aka Hurricane Elaine) ran out of gas while driving me to elementary school in her nightgown, I vowed to never operate a vehicle without being fully dressed and I mostly succeeded. But I never really thought about why until that entire experience spilled out onto my computer screen while I was writing my 2010 release, *Magnolia Wednesdays*.

When I was in my twenties, my roommates and I started a tradition of eating birthday cake for breakfast. I continued that tradition when I got married and had children. We still celebrate birthdays that way and so do the characters in my novel *A Week at the Lake*.

My mother's never-fail egg soufflé recipe often accompanies those real-life birthday breakfasts and has

been served by Madeline Singer in most of the Ten Beach Road novels along with the very real Ted Peters Famous Smoked Fish spread I grew up eating and still pick up whenever I'm in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Given all these personal traditions and memories that have made their way into my novels, I guess I shouldn't have been surprised when I found myself thinking about the portrait of my aunt Lois in the wedding dress worn by generations of family brides that always hung over my grandmother's bed. A portrait I hadn't seen in decades, but that somehow inspired what became *My Ex-Best Friend's Wedding*.

I really, really, wanted to wear that dress when I got married. When I discovered that another family member was already slated to wear it, I flew home to go dress shopping with my mother.

For reasons that I no longer understand (my husband and I just celebrated our 33rd anniversary and my recollection of the details of that shopping trip has blurred), I fell in love with the first (and therefore

only!) wedding dress I tried on: a sample dress that cost ninety-nine dollars. Which I'm pretty sure made it the least expensive dress worn at our wedding.

Because it was such a bargain, it didn't occur to me to store it in any special way. In fact, it hung in the closet of my childhood bedroom for years.

When I gave birth to sons, I realized that my wedding dress was not destined to become a family heirloom. It dangled in my childhood closet for a few more years. When we moved to Atlanta we left a lot of things behind. Unaccountably, my wedding dress came with us.

There it hung in the back of my closet mostly forgotten. Until one Halloween when I had no costume and no time to find one.

I'm a little embarrassed to admit that it became my go-to costume. I painted my face white and became a Bride of Frankenstein. Then I added a crown and became a queen. Flowers added to the headpiece that anchored the veil turned me into a medieval maiden. At some point I added wings and flitted around as a fairy princess and an angel.

I finally let go of it when we downsized into an intown hi-rise a couple years ago. I feel a little bad that I don't remember where it ended up or in what shape. On the other hand, I got to wear it a lot more than most brides wear their wedding dress.

Recently, I learned that the family wedding dress had been "retired" and that the veil had disintegrated.

Happily, the fictional version of THE DRESS that it inspired will never fall apart or become too small. And it certainly won't be turned into a Halloween costume. I made sure to give it to female characters who will treasure it forever.



WEDDING PLAYLIST!
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Recipes

HONEY HAM AND SWISS CHEESE QUICHE

The beauty of this dish is that it is relatively easy. Yet, it takes on the look, taste, and feel of a much more labor-intensive dish. Your guests will think that you have worked tirelessly over this quiche, slaving away in the kitchen. Moreover, it is popular with a variety of individuals, both young and old, because without the traditional thick crust, it delights with a light, smooth bite. As a result, this recipe is a keeper. Enjoy!

1 package of sliced ham from the deli

(Do not use a thick ham slice as it does not blend well through the cooking process. You do not want your guests to have to bite through a muscle-tough tissue of meat!)

1 block of Swiss cheese

2 cups of milk

4 eggs

1 cup baking mix

black pepper

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Spray glass pie plate (deeper dish one) with cooking spray.
- Chop the ham (rough chop small pieces and no need for uniformity).
- Chop the cheese (same as above).
- Put ham, then cheese, into the pie plate.
- Large mixing bowl: stir milk, eggs, baking mix, and pepper.
- Pour into pie plate.
- Bake for 35 minutes and check for doneness (if it goes over 1–2 minutes you are still good).

Credit: Chris Daniels, manager, The Cameron House Inn, Manteo, NC

THE BAYWAY BRIDGE SPRITZ

2 oz Aperol

2 oz sparkling white wine

1 oz fresh grapefruit juice

Splash of club soda

Grapefruit slice for garnish

Fill a wine glass with ice. Add Aperol, sparkling wine, and grapefruit juice. Top off with club soda and garnish.

READER REMORSE

(For when you finish a book you loved or the one you didn't!!!)

Chilled Tito's Vodka over ice

Squeeze of lime

WAR AND PEACE

(For when you had a long-overwrought day)

Equal parts Fireball Whisky and Rum

Chata mix with a cinnamon stick

Serve in a chocolate cup

A MOSCOW GENTLEMAN

Stoli Vodka or other Russian vodka

Orange juice

Splash of cranberry juice

Fresh lime

BIG LITTLE LIES

4 oz pomegranate vodka

1 sprig mint

8 oz pomegranate juice

Shake vigorously over ice.

Pour in martini glass.

Garnish with mint. Enjoy the lies!

RUBY SLIPPERS

1½ oz grapefruit vodka

1½ oz cranberry juice

Fill a rocks glass with ice.

Add ingredients.

Garnish with an orange wedge or strawberries on a high heeled shoe if available.

Click your heels and enjoy.

Credit: Leslie Parent and the B's Book Club

Discussion Questions

1. Kendra kept a terrible secret from her daughter, Lauren. Do you understand why she made that choice? Would you have been able to forgive her if you were Lauren?
2. Kendra left Jake at the altar. Have you ever witnessed a bride or groom back out at the last minute? Similarly, in the part of the ceremony where the officiate says, "If anyone can show just cause why this couple cannot lawfully be joined together in matrimony, let them speak now or forever hold their peace," have you ever witnessed someone actually objecting during the ceremony?
3. Kendra never married because no one could compare to her first love Jake. When Jake enters her life again, is Kendra happy about it? How has time changed them both? Why do you think it's easier for Jake to understand the decisions Kendra made than it is for Lauren? Do you know where your first love is now? If you didn't stay together, do you wonder what would have happened if you had?
4. Do you believe in love at first sight? Did you know you were going to marry your current spouse the moment you saw him or her? What was the deciding factor?
5. Lauren and Bree were such close friends. What kept them from resolving their differences? Have you ever had a close friendship that ended? What happened? Do you wish you could make up?
6. Bree's marriage is not the fairy tale she was hoping for. What do you think of her reasons for staying with her husband? Would you do the same?
7. Both Lauren and Bree are writers, but they have pursued their writing careers very differently. Why do you think that is? Do you have any interest in writing a book? Do you think you would approach it more like Lauren or Bree?
8. How do you feel about Lauren and Spencer's relationship? Do you think relationships are harder or easier as you get older?
9. The book takes place in New York City and the Outer Banks, very different places. Do you see yourself living—and thriving—in one of these settings more than the other? Why?
10. Kendra acts more like Bree's mother than Bree's biological mother. What are the qualities of a good mother? Did you understand why Lauren is sometimes jealous or resentful of Kendra's relationship with Bree?
11. Both Lauren and Bree wanted to wear the wedding dress handed down through Lauren's family. Is there a similar tradition in your family? If not, would you like to start one? Would you like to see your daughter wear your wedding gown or do you think each bride should choose a dress she falls in love with?
12. Both Lauren and Bree wanted to wear THE DRESS, but they envisioned very different weddings. Do you think brides are often pulled between what they envision and family obligations and expectations? Did you or do you have a clear idea of what type of wedding you wanted or want? What was your favorite part of your wedding or a wedding you've attended?

BOOK CLUB ACTIVITIES

Bring one nostalgic wedding item—yours, a friend's, a family member's—and discuss what role this item played

Share a fun wedding adventure, either as an attendee or as the guests of honor

Have a costume contest and wear wedding attire such as a bridesmaid dress or a veil

Create a slideshow of wedding photos featuring group members

Curate a playlist of the group's favorite wedding songs

About the Author



WENDY WAX, a former broadcaster, is the author of fifteen novels and two novellas, including *Best Beach Ever*, *One Good Thing*, *Sunshine Beach*, *A Week at the Lake*, *While We Were Watching Downton Abbey*, *The House on Mermaid Point*, *Ocean Beach*, and *Ten Beach Road*. The mother of two grown sons, she left the suburbs of Atlanta for a high-rise in town where she and her husband are happily downsized.

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